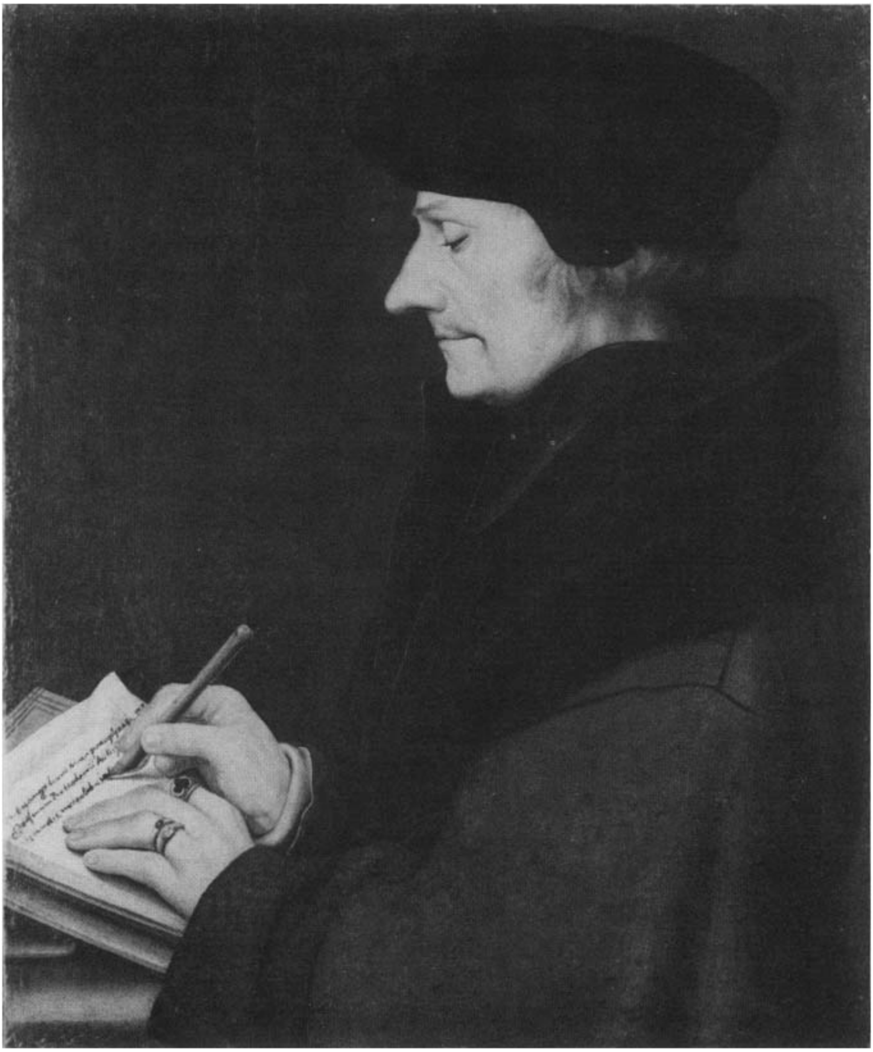
THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 1252 TO 1355

COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 9



Erasmus
Hans Holbein the Younger, 1523
Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, Kunstmuseum

THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 1252 TO 1355

1522 TO 1523

translated by R.A.B. Mynors

annotated by James M. Estes

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Collected Works of Erasmus

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Contents

Illustrations
viii

Preface
ix

Map showing the principal places mentioned in volume 9
xix

LETTERS 1252 TO 1355
1

Table of Correspondents
460

Works Frequently Cited
463

Short-Title Forms for Erasmus' Works
466

Index
471

Illustrations

Erasmus
frontispiece
Erasmus *Paraphrasis in Mattheum* title-page
7
Jakob Ziegler
25
Autograph letter from Willibald Pirckheimer
to Erasmus, Ep 1265
42
Letter from Erasmus to Duke George of Saxony, Ep 1283
88
Huldrych Zwingli
184
Pope Adrian VI
204
Erasmus *Paraphrasis in Ioannem* title-page
230
Erasmus' edition of the works of St Hilary of Poitiers,
dedicatory preface
244
Erasmus *Catalogus lucubrationum* title-page
292
Diego López Zúñiga
Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates title-page
330
The hands of Erasmus
396

Preface

When Erasmus wrote the first letter in this volume, which covers the period January 1522–March 1523, he was in the third month of a sojourn in Basel that was to last, with only brief interruptions, until April 1529. He had decided to leave Louvain and go to Basel in part because he was weary of controversy with the Louvain theologians, in part because he wanted to see the annotations to his third edition of the New Testament through Froben's press, and most of all because he feared that pressure from the imperial court, which had been back in the Netherlands since May 1521, would force him to take a public stand against Luther.[1] His original intention had apparently been to return to Brabant in the spring of 1522.[2] But it was difficult for him to leave Basel, a city with important attractions and advantages. It contained many good friends, the legacy of his earlier stay there in 1514–16. It was not involved in the war between Charles v and Francis i that had broken out in 1521. Most of all, in religious matters it had a liberal-reformist atmosphere congenial to a man of Erasmus' views and was still years away from decisive adherence to the Reformation. On the other hand, the local wine had an adverse effect on Erasmus' health,[3] and the summer of 1522 saw a prolonged uproar caused by the antics of some adherents of the Reformation.[4] So Erasmus was for a time determined to go elsewhere. But an attempted trip to Rome in the autumn had to be aborted because of a bad attack of the stone at Constance and also because of reports of the dangers of the journey.[5] Similarly, plans to migrate to France early in 1523 were abandoned partly because Erasmus' health improved with the aid of some imported Burgundy wine but mostly because his hopes for an early

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[1] See Epp 1242 introduction, 1302:11–16, 1342:57, 105–10, and Allen Ep 2792:13–23.

[2] Ep 1257:12

[3] Ep 1311:22, 34–5

[4] See Ep 1293 n8.

[5] Ep 1319:11–16

peace between the two monarchs were disappointed.[6] Meanwhile, reports of preparations for war, of religious persecution, and of the scarcity of Burgundy wine, as well as the knowledge that at least one old adversary in Louvain had become an inquisitor, made a return to the Netherlands even less attractive than it had been at the outset.[7]

Until September 1522, Erasmus lived in Froben's house, and thereafter in a house rented from him. During the period we are concerned with, he completed a number of works that were duly published by the Froben press: the third edition of the New Testament (February 1522); the paraphrase on Matthew (March), dedicated to Charles v; two new expanded editions of the *Colloquia* (March and August); the *Epistola de esu carnium* (August); two *apologiae* against his Spanish detractors, Diego López Zúñiga and Sancho Carranza, printed with the *Epistola de esu carnium*; an edition of Arnobius Junior (September), dedicated to Pope Adrian vi; the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (dated 30 January 1523, published in April); the paraphrase on John (February); and an edition of Hilary of Poitiers (February).

The works listed above certainly add up to an achievement of considerable magnitude, especially for someone who suffered more than his usual measure of poor health during the period in question.[8] Nevertheless, the predominant theme of the letters in this volume is not that of scholarly production but rather that of the serious problems posed by 'the sorry business of Luther.' By the beginning of 1522, the Reformation in Germany had entered a period of spontaneous and often disorderly growth that was to last into 1526. Even though Luther had been excommunicated and outlawed, reform erupted everywhere, especially in the towns. As the Reformation spread and gathered strength, Erasmus increasingly found himself caught uncomfortably between papalist and antipapalist zealots, each faction demanding that he publicly espouse its cause. The more Erasmus persisted in espousing 'the cause of Christ' as he understood it, and the more he tried to stand aloof from the conflict and impress on both parties the urgent need to restore 'unity and concord in the gospel,' the more he found himself 'a heretic to both sides.'[9]

Erasmus' Catholic critics were by far the more dangerous. On 19 January 1522, Juan Luis Vives wrote from Louvain that Erasmus' old adversaries among the Louvain theologians were trying to persuade the emperor that he was a supporter of Luther.[10] Erasmus believed that their motive was the old hatred of the humanities that had made them hostile to him long before anyone had heard of Luther, and that their aim was thus not simply to destroy him personally but also to discredit those studies which had tended to undermine their authority.[11] Erasmus knew that he had other detractors at the imperial court as well. The most dangerous of these, he thought, was the papal nuncio, Girolamo Aleandro. For almost a year Erasmus had been convinced that Aleandro was bent on discrediting him at both the imperial and papal courts as a supporter of Luther.[12] Indeed, Erasmus tended to see all his detractors in the Netherlands and at Rome as agents of Aleandro.[13] Since the nuncio was himself a distinguished humanist, Erasmus attributed his hostility not to hatred of the humanities but to insatiable ambition and to a mind poisoned by the slanders of unnamed 'malicious detractors.'[14] Aleandro's supposed 'tool' in Rome was Zúñiga, who had already published an intemperate attack on the first edition of Erasmus' New Testament.[15] In mid-February, Jakob Ziegler wrote from Rome that Zúñiga had compiled a catalogue of Erasmus' allegedly heretical views (*Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates*),[16] from which he read aloud at gatherings of influential personages. Moreover, Erasmus knew that the newly elected pope, his fellow-countryman Adrian VI, although hitherto personally well disposed toward him, was nevertheless a non-humanist and sternly anti-Lutheran.[17] So he feared that Zúñiga and others in Rome and elsewhere might succeed in turning Adrian against him.

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[6] See Ep 1319 introduction.
[7] Ep 1342:638–47
[8] See Ep 1256 n2.
[9] See especially Epp 1252, 1259, 1267–8, 1278, 1305.
[10] Ep 1256:11–21

Consequently, Erasmus undertook measures to secure his reputation and good standing with both emperor and pope. At the suggestion of Jean Glapion, the emperor's personal confessor, Erasmus attempted in April to pay a visit to Brabant in order to make his case in person at the imperial court, capitalizing on the good impression already made by the presentation copy of the paraphrase on Matthew.[18] But two days into the journey his health broke down and he had to turn back to Basel,[19] where he quickly dispatched several letters (Epp 1273–6 and doubtless several others as well) to important men at court, including Glapion. Erasmus made substantially

* * * * *

[11] Epp 1263:29–34, 1268:59–66. The same point is reiterated in Epp 1273–5, 1299–1300, 1330.

[12] See Ep 1256 n11.

[13] Ep 1268:67–78

[14] Epp 1263:1–3, 1268:70–2

[15] See Ep 1260 n36.

[16] Ibidem lines 167–71, 203–12

[17] See Ep 1304 introduction.

[18] Epp 1269–70

[19] Epp 1302:51–7, 1342:333ff

the same points in all four of the surviving letters: those who call him a supporter of Luther are either stupid or else shameless liars; he has made it perfectly clear in his published letters (ie, those in the *Epistolae ad diversos* of August 1521) that he has no agreement with Luther's party, whose subversive behaviour he has always disliked and attempted to restrain;[20] he could have done the Lutherans a great favour and caused quite an uproar in Germany by joining their cause, but he would rather die ten times over than start a schism; all this is well understood by the Lutherans, who hate him and threaten him with 'vicious pamphlets'; all the ills at the root of the current troubles can be cured peacefully 'by the emperor's authority and the integrity of the new pope'; Erasmus will do what he can, as a humble scholar, to advance the cause of the emperor and of the Christian faith, if only the emperor will provide him with the necessary leisure and tranquillity by making his imperial pension permanent and defending his reputation against shameless falsehoods. These were, of course, conveniently one-sided generalizations. In this context it would not have been prudent for Erasmus to admit, for example, that he could still see some good in Luther or that there were many 'Lutherans' who, like Zwingli[21] and Ulrich von Hutten,[22] still thought well of him and hoped that he would be won for the Reformation.

None of the responses to these letters survives. Erasmus informs us in several places, however, that Glapion, Gattinara (the imperial chancellor), and others wrote him 'letters full of sympathy,' urging him to continue his 'labours for the cause of learning,' and indicating the emperor's personal good will.[23] Moreover, the imperial secretary, Guy Morillon, wrote to assure Erasmus that his imperial pension (as well as the income from his benefice at Courtrai) was safe.[24] (Given the chronic disorder of the imperial finances, that was no guarantee of prompt or regular payment, as Erasmus was to discover.) Unfortunately, the good will of the emperor and his entourage did not allay the hostility of Erasmus' Louvain adversaries, who returned to the attack after the emperor's departure for Spain in May. The Carmelite Nicholaas Baechem (Egmondanus) found fresh evidence of Lutheran heresy in the new edition of the *Colloquia* and denounced their author both in public sermons and 'at drinking-parties.' Erasmus responded with letters of protest (Epp 1299–1301) addressed to officials of the Netherlands government and to the theological faculty at Louvain, defending the orthodoxy of the impugned passages and once again identifying hatred of the humanities as the real motive for the attack. These letters, however, remained without effect, and the battle with the Louvain theologians was far from over. Small wonder that in the long introduction (Ep 1334) to his edition of Hilary, the scourge of Arianism, Erasmus took the opportunity to comment at length on the baleful effects of theological controversy.

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[20] After seeing the *Epistolae ad diversos*, Luther wrote: 'Erasmus at last reveals that he is a wholehearted enemy of Luther and his doctrine, though with deceitful and clever words he pretends to be a friend' (WA-Br II 527:22–4).

[21] Epp 1314–15

[22] See Ep 1331 n24.

[23] Epp 1299:41–4, 1300:63–6, 1302:62–6, 1331:12–19, 1342:281–92

[24] Ep 1287

Meanwhile, Erasmus was working to secure his good reputation in Rome. By mid-July he had received the good news that Zúñiga's anti-Erasmus campaign had not gone down well with the college of cardinals, tried to prevent the publication of the *Erasmi blasphemiae et impietates.*[25] But this left Erasmus in the dark and full of worry about the attitude of the new pope himself, who was still *en route* from Spain to Rome, where he arrived in late August. Erasmus first sent feelers via his old friend Pierre Barbier, who was now a member of Pope Adrian's household. The second of two surviving letters to Barbier (Epp 1294, 1302) contains a brief account of Aleandro's unsuccessful campaign against Erasmus at the imperial court and emphasizes that the emperor, the king of England, and the college of cardinals, as well as other dignitaries of church and state, were clearly Erasmus' supporters. Then, in September, Erasmus made a direct approach to Adrian himself with the dedication of the edition of Arnobius to him. In the covering letter for the presentation copy (Ep 1310), Erasmus observed that it was intended as 'a kind of antidote' against the virulence of malicious tongues, 'should any hostile report of me come to your ears,' and begged the pope either to reject such reports or at least to keep an open mind until he had had a chance to defend himself.

Four months of anxious waiting passed before Erasmus received, in January 1523, the pope's reply (Ep 1324). In it Adrian so roundly dismissed Erasmus' critics and in general displayed such obvious good will that Erasmus was overjoyed and called the letter his *Breve aureum*. It was not pure gold, however, for Adrian added his name to the long list of those who urgently pressed Erasmus to serve the church and silence his detractors by writing against Luther. Erasmus' reasons for declining to do so are most fully and frankly stated not in his reply to the pope (Ep 1352) but in his response (Ep 1313) to a similar appeal from Duke George of Saxony (Ep 1298). Some of those reasons were in fact just excuses: his age and poor health; the lack of leisure to read all that had been written on both sides; the fact that many others had already written against Luther. But the real reason was there, too: Erasmus could not honestly 'write against Luther bitterly enough to avoid seeming lukewarm to the other party' or gently enough to avoid being 'torn to pieces' by Luther's men. To Erasmus it was beyond doubt that Luther had begun in a truly Christian way with an attack on real abuses, including the worldliness of the papacy. While it is true, he said, that Luther has not done this with appropriate mildness, it is also true that 'the foolish, ignorant, and subversive clamour' of self-seeking 'monks and theologians who think like monks' have made things much worse and done great harm to the cause of both Christ and the pope. Moreover, the 'most savage' bull of excommunication against Luther and the 'even more savage' edict of outlawry have only embittered the conflict without changing anyone's mind. Meanwhile, Luther's own 'insufferable faults' have 'ruined his good things,' and many of his followers are even worse than he is. Now there is such an atmosphere of bitter hatred that if Luther is overthrown, the victorious monks will probably destroy all the good things in Luther along with the bad things, thus doing further damage to the glory of Christ and the purity of the gospel.[26] Erasmus' conclusion was that, in these circumstances, any direct move by him against Luther would only fuel an already destructive controversy and make him more unpopular than ever with the zealots on both sides. In his letter to Pope Adrian, Erasmus expressed the same view, but prudently avoided any references to 'the good things in Luther' or to the 'savagery' of the bull of excommunication and the Edict of Worms (which Adrian had just called on the German Estates to enforce vigorously[27]).

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[25] Ep 1302:68–91

Erasmus' technique for appeasing those who pressured him to write against Luther was to offer to write instead about how to solve the Luther problem. In April 1522 he informed Glapion that he had begun 'a short treatise on how to end this business of Luther,' but that poor health had prevented its completion.[28] The work, which he later said was to have consisted of three dialogues,[29] would doubtless have had much in common with the *Axiomata*[30] of December 1520 and the *Consilium*[31] of January 1521. In December 1522, even before receiving the *Breve aureum*, Erasmus wrote to Pope Adrian (Ep 1329) offering to submit a plan for the restoration of

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[26] Cf Ep 1348.
[27] See Ep 1344 n10.
[28] Ep 1275:23–5
[29] Ep 1341A:1338–1415
[30] See Ep 1263 n10.
[31] See Ep 1267 n6.

tranquillity, an offer which the pope eagerly accepted (Ep 1338). Erasmus accordingly included his plan in Ep 1352, but the surviving text breaks off just at the point at which he was getting down to specifics. The letter does include, however, Erasmus' comments on the right and the wrong way to deal with the Lutherans. The wrong way, he said, is suppression by force, which failed to extinguish the Wycliffites in England and will be even less effective against the Lutherans in Germany, where political authority is dispersed among so many princes. The right way is for the pope to investigate and to remedy the sources of the Lutheran revolt, meanwhile imitating the divine mercy by forgiving those who had 'gone astray through the persuasion or influence of others.' Pope Adrian never replied to Erasmus' letter.

Erasmus' refusal to counsel severity against the Lutherans was motivated by concern for public peace and the common good of Christendom, not by any tender regard for Luther and the other reformers. Indeed, many of the letters in this volume testify to Erasmus' growing aversion to the reformers, and one can see him moving perceptibly in the direction of his eventual public breach with them. To someone who believed that 'the sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord'[32] and could say that, if pressed, he would 'abandon some portion of the truth sooner than disturb the peace,'[33] Luther and company had to seem at least as reckless and subversive as the 'monks and theologians.' Moreover, the Lutherans were beginning to hurl a variety of accusations at Erasmus which impugned both his character and his competence as a theologian. Some, who still believed that Erasmus was at heart on Luther's side, concluded that only cowardice and the hope for gain kept him in the papal ranks. They hoped, by fair means or foul, to manoeuvre him into their camp.[34] Others, chiefly the Wittenbergers, offended Erasmus even more deeply by charging that his views on free will were false, even Pelagian.[35] (Here, of course, was the issue that Erasmus would choose when he eventually made up his mind to write against Luther.) Determined to make clear to the 'warped minds' of the Lutherans where he really stood, Erasmus included in his long letter to Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342), published in February 1523, a catalogue of his grievances against the Lutherans. At the conclusion of the catalogue, he stated unequivocally that he would be neither leader nor colleague to those

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[32] Ep 1334:232

[33] Ep 1331:24–7. Cf Johann von Botzheim's gentle reproof in the opening paragraph of Ep 1335.

[34] Ep 1342:659–726

[35] See Ep 1259 n5.

who preferred to 'cause universal confusion' rather than work to 'secure the victory of Christ and the establishment among all men of concord in the gospel.'[36] One partisan of Luther who had hoped to manoeuvre Erasmus into the ranks of the reformers, Ulrich von Hutten, finally realized that Erasmus was not to be so manoeuvred. It was the reading of Ep 1342 which moved Hutten to write his *Expostulatio* against Erasmus.[37] The last letter in this volume was written on the eve of the outbreak of the controversy with Hutten, which turned out to be a prelude to the more serious controversy with Luther.

Of the 107 letters presented here, 60 were written by Erasmus and 47 were written to him. These letters contain references to more than 60 other letters that are no longer extant; because so many of the references are to an unspecified number of letters, an exact figure cannot be given, but 70 to 75 would be a good guess. Only 40 of the surviving letters were published by Erasmus himself, 23 in the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529, 7 as prefaces to various works, 9 as adjuncts to other publications, and one as a separate work. Of the remaining 67 letters, one (Ep 1280A) was published by its author in 1524, while the rest were published by a variety of scholars in the more than four centuries from Erasmus' death to 1974. Fourteen of them were first published by Allen himself. To allow the reader to discover the sequence in which the letters became known, the introduction to each letter cites the place where it was first published and identifies the manuscript source if one exists.

On the whole, Allen's text and his ordering of the letters have been followed; but there are exceptions. First, Allen Ep 1280 has been redated to 1528 and will appear at the appropriate place in CWE 14. Second, Allen Ep 1412 has been redated to mid-January 1523 and appears here as Ep 1337A. Third, two letters omitted by Allen, one by Battista Casali and one by Caspar Ursinus Velius, have been included here as Epp 1270A and 1280A. Fourth, where Allen preferred the shorter of the two extant versions of Ep 1301, we have opted for the longer version, believing it to be the more interesting one historically. Fifth, Aleandro's alternative draft of Ep 1324, long excerpts from which Allen included in his footnotes to the official version of the letter, is here printed separately as Ep 1324A. Finally, the long letter to Johann von Botzheim that Erasmus published as the *Catalogus lucubrationum* and that Allen placed in his volume 1 as a preface to the correspondence is included here as Ep 1341A. Our text of the *Catalogus*, like Allen's, includes passages that Erasmus added to the second edition (September 1524) and

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[36] Ep 1342:1006–18

[37] See Ep 1341A n283.

that frequently refer to events, like the controversy with Hutten, outside the chronological scope of this volume. This seemed obviously preferable to publishing the interpolations as isolated fragments in CWE 10. Textual integrity is surely preferable to chronological tidiness.

The index to this volume, prepared by Howard Hotson, contains references to the persons, places, and works mentioned in the volume, following the plan for the correspondence series. When that series of volumes is completed, the reader will also be supplied with an index of classical and scriptural references. Because the three volumes of the CEBR are now available, the biographical annotation of this volume has been kept to an absolute minimum. So has the citation of biographical sources. Wherever information is supplied without the citation of a source, the reader is tacitly referred to the appropriate article in the CEBR and to the literature there cited.

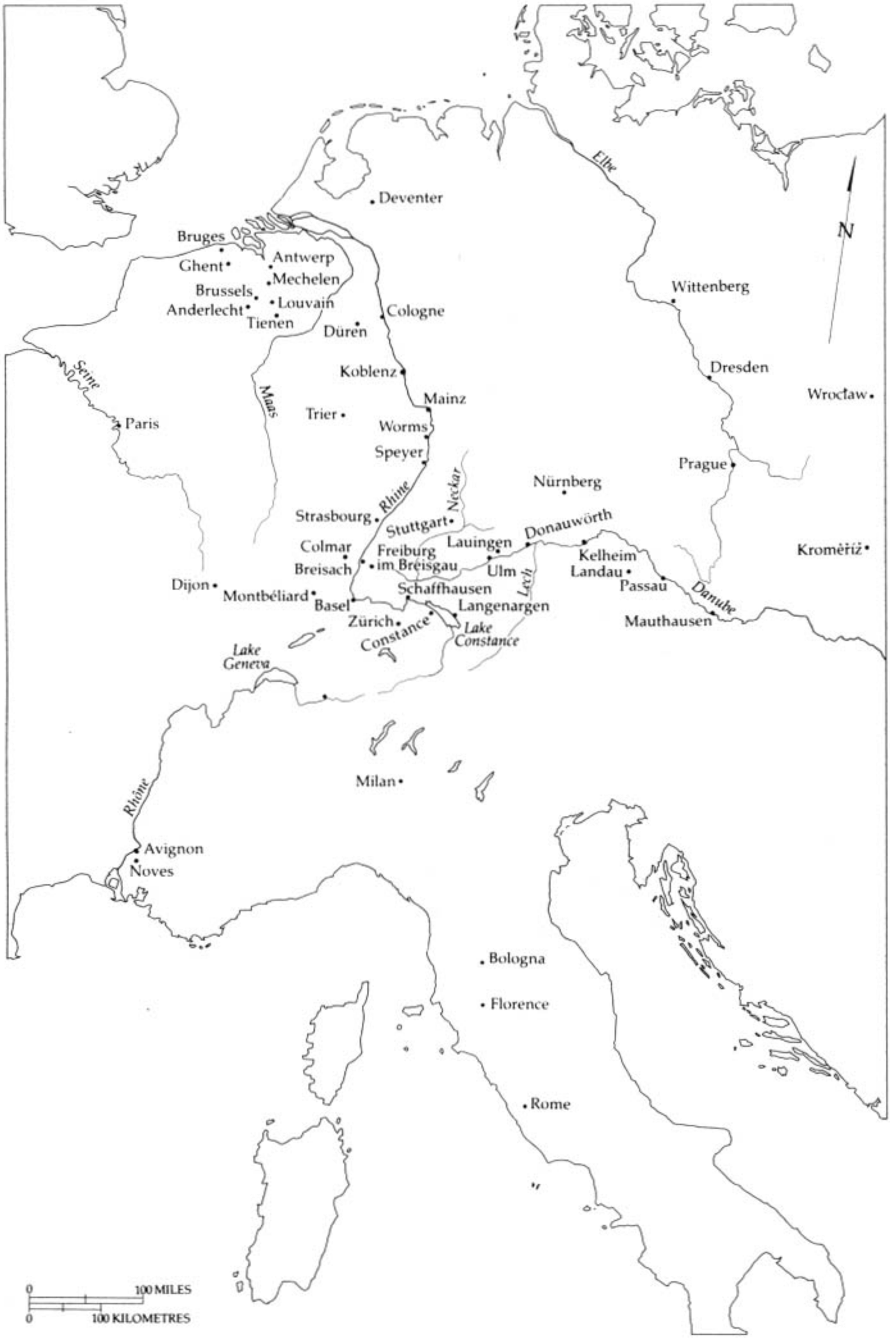
With the exception of Epp 1270A, 1280A, and 1334, the letters in this volume were translated by R.A.B. Mynors. The translation of Ep 1280A is by Ann and Alexander Dalzell; Alexander Dalzell also translated Ep 1270A and revised and completed the translations of Epp 1301 and 1324A. The translation of Ep 1334 is that by John C. Olin and James F. Brady jr, first published in slightly abbreviated form in Olin's *Six Essays on Erasmus* (Fordham University Press 1979) 93–120. For further details, see the introduction to the letter.

I should like here to record my personal debt to those colleagues who have given me the benefit of their advice and erudition. Alexander Dalzell of Trinity College, University of Toronto, provided abundant and invaluable assistance with the classical annotations. Erika Rummel of the CWE editorial staff read all the notes; her comments have led to a significant number of corrections and improvements. The following scholars generously responded to my requests for information on specific issues within their fields of competence: Leonard Boyle OP, Prefect of the Vatican Library; Rika Maniates of the Faculty of Music at the University of Toronto; Martin Lowry of the University of Warwick; Robert D. Sider of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania; John C. Olin of Fordham University; John J. Bateman of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; Jane E. Phillips of the University of Kentucky at Lexington; James Farge CSB of the University of St Thomas in Houston; and Peter Bietenholz of the University of Saskatchewan. The notes on currency were supplied by John H. Munro of the University of Toronto. The assistance of several other scholars has been acknowledged at the appropriate places in the notes. A special word of thanks goes to the copyeditor, Mary Baldwin, whose sharp eye caught many a petty blunder before it was too late.

Most of the work on this volume was done using materials in the library of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at Victoria University in the University of Toronto, especially the Centre's splendid Erasmus Collection. For patristic and medieval texts I had recourse to the library of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies on the campus of St Michael's College, University of Toronto. I am deeply grateful to both institutions and their staffs.

Finally, the editors wish to record once again their gratitude to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, without whose generous assistance the Collected Works of Erasmus could not be published.

JME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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 1252 TO 1355

1252 / To Udalricus Zasius Basel, 4 January 1522

First published by Allen, this letter survived in two contemporary copies, which in 1924 (the date of Allen's volume 5) were owned privately by Dr J.F.M. Sterck of Haarlem and Dr Bruno Clausen of Rostock. No information on the subsequent fate of either manuscript is available.

On Zasius, see Ep 303.

TO ZASIUS, THRICE-GREATEST OF MEN, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Greetings, my most learned Zasius. I was delighted to hear that you are well, and in good spirits too. Ursinus[1] is as good a scholar and as open-hearted a man as any I ever saw. To him alone I almost owe my life; his delightful company is so refreshing. A visit to Freiburg would not be unwelcome,[2] had I not bound myself wholly to the treadmill once again.

As for this business of Luther, I know not how it will turn out. From the start I always foresaw that it might end in civil strife, and now I fear just this. Christ take it in his keeping! I have certainly discouraged the affair, at the outset and all along. For your part, if you ever supported Luther openly, I think it wiser for you to remain silent than to attack him in print. You will get no credit for it; people will think you a coward or a time-server. Leave him to his destiny.

I can write no more. Give my greetings to Latomus,[3] and thank him for

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1252

[1] Caspar Ursinus Velius (Ep 1280A). At this point he was visiting Basel, but by 19 January was back in Freiburg (AK Ep 835).

[2] For another invitation to visit Freiburg, see Ep 1316. Erasmus made the desired visit in March 1523; see Ep 1353 introduction.

[3] Bartholomaeus Latomus (Mason) of Arlon (c 1498/9–1570) studied at Freiburg, taking an MA in October 1517. He then commenced the study of law under Zasius, whose friend he became, and probably met Erasmus in nearby Basel in 1518. In November 1521, Latomus, now a lecturer in arts at Freiburg, met Erasmus in Strasbourg and accompanied him as far as Sélestat (Ep 1342:237–40). From 1522 to 1530 Latomus taught classics at the universities of Trier and Cologne. After further study (1530–1) under Goclenius (Ep 1209) at the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain, he went to Paris, where he became professor of Latin at the Schola Regia (1534–42). His reputation as one of the great Latin scholars of his day was based primarily on his work on Cicero. From 1542 until his death he was councillor to the archbishop of Trier and a champion of Catholic reform.

the elegant poem he wrote in my honour.[4] I will write at another opportunity.

Basel, 4 January 1522

It is not a good plan for an old man to transplant himself.[5] Be brave; seek comfort in liberal studies and in your old friends.[6] This storm will one day turn into fine weather, and you must keep yourself for that.

1253 / From Urbanus Rhegius Langenargen, 4 January 1522

The autograph of this letter, which was first published in LB, is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.126).

Urbanus Rhegius (1489–1541), whose real name was probably Urban Rieger, was born in Langenargen near Lindau on the northern shore of Lake Constance. He took his BA at Freiburg, where he lived with Zasius, and his MA at Ingolstadt, where Johann Eck (Ep 769) secured him a lectureship in rhetoric and poetry. After this he resumed the study of theology, settled in Constance, and was ordained in 1519. In 1520 he became preacher at the cathedral in Augsburg. In December 1521 he had to leave Augsburg because of his inclination toward Lutheranism, but by 1523 he was back. In December 1524 he formally adopted Lutheranism, as a consequence of which he was once more forced out of the city in 1530. He spent his remaining years as a reformer and church leader in the duchy of Braunschweig-Lüneburg.

TO THE LEARNED ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM FROM URBANUS RHEGIUS, AS FROM ONE THEOLOGIAN TO ANOTHER, GREETING

Your return to us, Erasmus my learned friend, is a matter for rejoicing in Germany and indeed in all Christendom. We have waited for you as for a sun destined to dispel the darkness of our night – that internal darkness, I mean, which is the most perilous of all; for you are the prime author of the revival of theology in our own time, and whoever does not acknowledge that is both false and ungrateful. You were the first to recall theologians from

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[4] The poem appears not to have survived.

[5] This whole postscript sounds very much like a comment on the circumstances mentioned in Zasius' letter of 20 March (Ep 1266:26–30): the ugly conflict between university and town in Freiburg (the 'storm' that Erasmus refers to in line 20) and Zasius' consequent determination to leave. Given the duration of the town-gown controversy in Freiburg (Ep 1266 n3), it is unlikely that Ep 1266 would have been the earliest expression of Zasius' desire to 'get away from it all,' so Erasmus might well have known of that desire and the reason for it when he wrote this letter.

[6] Latin and sense are uncertain.

the muddy pools of the scholastics to the sacred fount of Scripture, and that too in such modest terms that your reproof, so salutary and so badly needed, gave no offence even to your enemies, except for some few moping owls who deserve to be ignored or pitied rather than disliked. First of all, you urged us to study the theologians of antiquity; then led us, as it were, upstream to the crystal springs of the original Scriptures; in a word, you achieved so much by sleepless nights of scholarly activity that scarcely any branch of learning now makes such happy progress as divine theology. It is a wonderful sight to see humane and sacred studies so interconnected that they can be pursued together without conflict, though previously the machinations of the ignorant made them worse than enemies. All this we owe to your efforts; you have left no stone unturned to secure that in place of their empty philosophizing the schools of theology, at long last, should recognize the divine philosophy of the cross. Rejoice, Erasmus, in your victory; it begins to be recognized, not among the learned only but by laymen too, who have been convinced by your *Paraclesis*[1] that Scripture is the property of every Christian.

The other day I heard a married woman[2] discoursing on the law and the gospel in Paul's Epistle to the Romans with much more knowledge than those great doctors of divinity would have shown in the old days – so much has your clarion call roused the whole world to the philosophy of Christ. I have no doubt at all that to breathe new life into theology is what you were born to do. Fulfil your destiny: purge Augustine[3] and Hilary[4] with your accomplished hand, until we can distinguish true from false, as you did so successfully in years gone by with Jerome.[5]

The church in Augsburg, where I have preached Christ now for eighteen months, prays for you zealously; I expect to return to it shortly. The man who brings you this is of good family and devoted to you for your rare gifts of mind, although no scholar himself. Farewell, our prince of theology and of all learning.

From Langenargen, 4 January 1522

Michael Hummelberg[6] my fellow-countryman sends you his greetings.

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1253

[1] The *Paraclesis* was Erasmus' preface to the *Novum Testamentum* of 1516. From February 1519 onwards Froben reprinted the preface separately, sometimes combining it with the *Ratio verae theologiae*.

[2] Perhaps Margarethe Peutinger; see Ep 1247.

[3] See Ep 1309.

[4] See Ep 1334.

[5] See Epp 326, 396.

[6] Michael Hummelberg (1487–1537) of Ravensburg, where he was within easy

To the honourable Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, the eminent theologian and my most respected teacher, in Basel

1254 / From Maarten Davidts Brussels, 10 January 1522

This is the first of ten letters in this volume of which the original manuscripts were preserved in the so-called Burscher Collection (MS 0331m) at the University Library in Leipzig. The collection, whose earliest known owner was Bonifacius Amerbach (Ep 408), comprised autograph letters addressed to Erasmus. (At least one letter *by* Erasmus and in a secretary's hand, Ep 1278, was in the collection as well.) The letters found their way to the Netherlands and then to England, where they were acquired by a Württemberg diplomat whose widow gave them to a German pastor in London, who in turn gave them to Professor Johann Friedrich Burscher in Leipzig. Burscher first published many of the letters in his *Spicilegia* (1784–1802). A century later the entire collection was re-edited and published as *Briefe an Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam* by Joseph Förstemann and Otto Günther (Leipzig 1904; repr Wiesbaden 1968). See the introduction to that volume for the history of the Burscher Collection, which was destroyed in World War II. This letter is Ep 4 in Förstemann/Günther.

Maarten Davidts (d 1535) was a canon of Brussels with whom Erasmus usually lodged when in that city; see Ep 532:35n.

Master Erasmus, my beloved teacher, on the ninth of December[1] I received your letter[2] written from Basel on the morrow of St Thomas the Apostle. To send you a brief answer by way of acknowledgment: in the first place, as regards the money which your lordship left in my keeping for the use of Franz Birckmann,[3] I did in fact pay it over on the thirteenth of December last to Franz himself, who came to Brussels then, he told me, to visit the prior of St Augustine's at Antwerp.[4] The prior, on orders it was said from the

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reach of Rhegius at Langenargen. Hummelberg was an enthusiastic Greek scholar who had studied in Paris and Rome and then settled down in his home town as a teacher.

1254

[1] A mistake for January. The feast of Thomas the Apostle falls on 21 December.

[2] Not extant

[3] Franz Birckmann, the Antwerp bookseller (Ep 258:14n)

[4] Jacob Proost (or Probst) of Ieper (1486–1562), prior of the Augustinian convent at Antwerp, who in 1521 had become a licentiate in theology at Wittenberg; see Ep 980:62n. He was now in trouble with the Inquisition and would shortly be

emperor, had been taken from Antwerp to Brussels and at that time was detained, as he still is, in Godshouse belonging to the Brethren of Nazareth,[5] but the reason for this or the business in which he is concerned I do not know. I have heard however that Baechem[6] and Latomus[7] and certain other people have had discussions with him, and that the case is to be settled soon. Some say that the prior will have to retract some things he has said in the pulpit, and so on.

As to your things,[8] you may be sure that up to now they have been faithfully and securely kept, and will be so kept for the future, as you hope and trust they will be. On the power of attorney[9] I have spoken with Master Guy;[10] it cannot be arranged through us unless you are present in person. Excuse my clumsy style. No more for the moment.

From Brussels, 10 January '22 (Roman style), your humble servant Maarten Davidts, at your service

To the most learned of men, Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his most worshipful teacher

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1255 / To Charles v Basel, 13 January 1522

This is the preface to Erasmus' paraphrase on Matthew, written in Basel in 1521 and published there by Froben in March 1522.

TO THE INVINCIBLE EMPEROR CHARLES, FIFTH OF THAT NAME, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Right well I know, invincible Emperor Charles, the great respect and reverence due to all the sacred literature which sainted Fathers put forth for our benefit under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and especially to those

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forced into a public recantation (9 February 1522); cf Epp 1256:25–8, 1258:4–5. In June 1522 he escaped, going first to Wittenberg, and then (May 1524) to Bremen, where he spent his remaining years as pastor and superintendent.

[5] The house of the Brethren of the Common Life at Brussels, founded in 1422

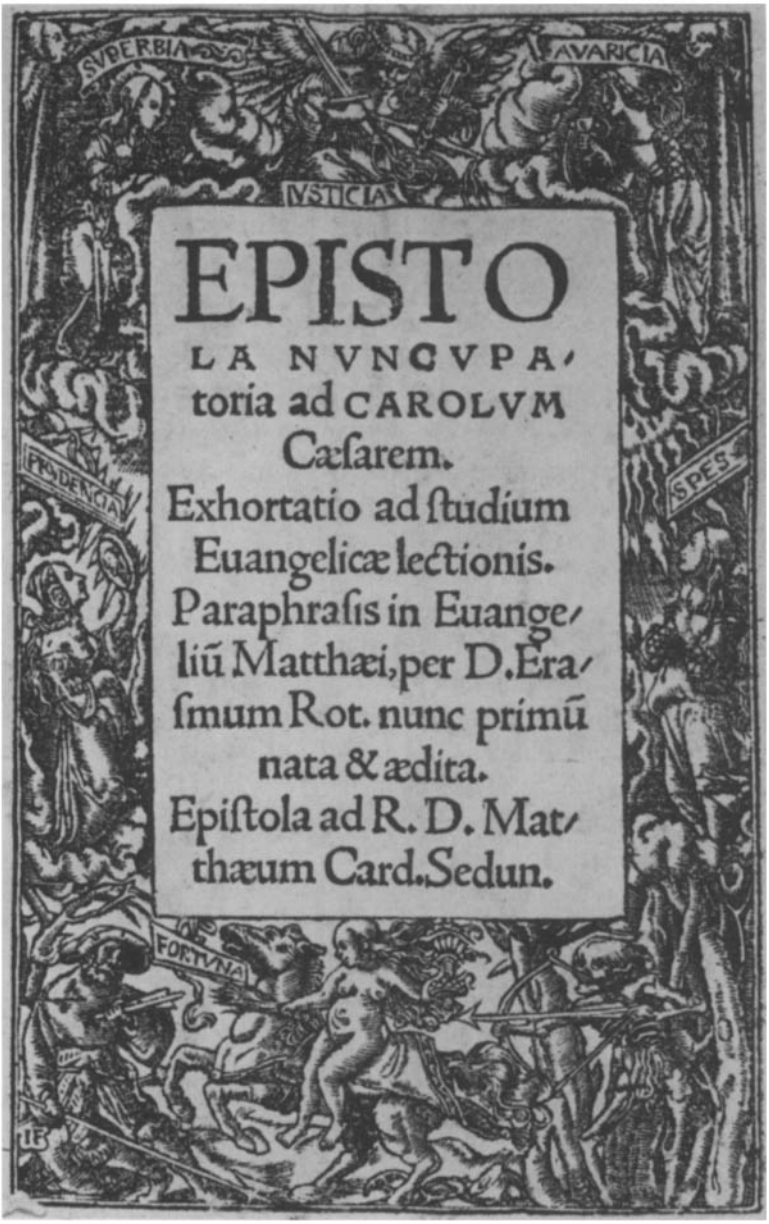
[6] Nicolaas Baechem of Egmond (d 1526) was prior of the Carmelites at Louvain, where he also taught theology at the university; see Ep 878:15n. In 1520 Charles v made him an assistant inquisitor. Baechem was one of Erasmus' most obstinate and intemperate critics, the first two editions of the New Testament and the March 1522 edition of the *Colloquia* being his particular targets; see especially Epp 1299–1302, and 1341A:928–1009. Erasmus, who detested Baechem, often made puns on 'Carmelite,' calling him 'camelus' or 'camelita.'

[7] See Epp 934 introduction and 4n, 1341A:830–9.

[8] Cf Epp 1258:1, 1275:11.

[9] In connection with one of Erasmus' pensions; see Ep 1287:9–22, 27–8.

[10] Guy Morillon, the emperor's personal secretary (Ep 1287)


SVPERBIA
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EPISTO
LA NVNCVPA-
toria ad CAROLVM
Cæſarem.
Exhortatio ad ſtudium
Euangelicæ lectionis.
Paraphraſis in Euange-
liũ Matthæi, per D. Era-
ſmum Rot. nunc primũ
nata & ædita.
Epiſtola ad R. D. Mat-
thæum Card. Sedun.

Erasmus *Paraphrasis in Mattheum* title-page
Basel: Froben 1522
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, University of Toronto

which give us a faithful account of all that our heavenly Father did or uttered in the person of his Son Jesus Christ for the salvation of the whole world; and I am well aware of my own unworthiness. When a few years ago I first set my hand to an exposition of the Pauline Epistles in the form of a paraphrase[1] – it was an unprompted impulse that put the idea into my head – I felt myself to be undertaking an exceedingly bold and self-confident enterprise and one 'full of dangerous hazard' as the saying goes;[2] so much so that after trying the experiment with two or three chapters, I was minded to furl my sails and abandon my intended course, had not my learned friends with surprising unanimity urged me to continue. Nor would their importunity allow me any rest until I had finished all the apostolic Epistles that we possess, although I had not intended to deal with any except those which beyond all question were written by St Paul. It has not always turned out well when I have obeyed the promptings of my friends; but in this instance I was gratified to find the result of my rash undertaking more successful than I had expected, both for its author, who earned very little unpopularity, and for all who wish to learn the gospel authority, who vie with one another in their gratitude, having found in my work an inspiration to pursue the wisdom of the apostles or a great aid in its pursuit.

Having performed this task, I was not expecting thereafter to have anything more to do with this type of literature. But no: I went to pay my respects to his Eminence Matthäus, cardinal of Sion,[3] who had encouraged[4] me to complete the canonical Epistles when he was in Brussels[5] on his way back from the Diet of Worms, and in our very first conversation, as though he had thought of this in advance, he began to urge me to do for St Matthew's Gospel what I had done for the apostolic Epistles. I at once made numerous excuses. I had already shown sufficient audacity, I said, in attempting this for the letters of the apostles. The apostles were of course inspired, but they were only human, while the majesty of Christ was too great for the same boldness to be permissible in respect of the words he uttered. If I were not deterred by the solemn nature of the task, yet the subject-matter was unsympathetic and did not admit of paraphrase; and not solely because in the gospel different characters appear, so that while the

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1255

[1] See Ep 710.

[2] Horace *Odes* 2.1.6; cf *Adagia* I iv 32.

[3] Matthäus Schiner (Ep 1295)

[4] See Ep 1171:50–7.

[5] Schiner spent the latter half of June 1521 in Brussels, departing for Milan on the thirtieth to negotiate with the Swiss on behalf of the emperor; LP III 1357, 1388.

writer adapts his style to suit them (as he has to), his pen is constrained within very narrow limits and of course is debarred from the freedom allowed to other kinds of commentary. For a paraphrase is a kind of commentary. Besides that, since a great part of the gospel consists of a narrative of events in a simple and straightforward style, he who seeks to paraphrase such material will perhaps be thought to do no more than, as the Greek proverb has it, kindle a lamp at midday.[6]

Then again, since the ancients in expounding the allegories show great variation and sometimes behave, in my view, as though they were not wholly serious, nor will it prove possible to set them down except as one who reports the words either of Christ or of the evangelist, it is clear that I should be facing very great difficulties. I need not add that Christ sometimes spoke as though at the time he wished not to be understood, for instance when he said, 'Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up,'[7] and again when he spoke of buying a sword[8] or being wary of the leaven of the Pharisees.[9] Again, in the discourse in which he foretells the destruction of Jerusalem, the end of this world, and the afflictions that will befall the apostles in the future,[10] Jesus so mixes and adapts what he has to say that he seems to me to have wished to remain obscure not only to the apostles but to us.

Again, there are some passages which in my opinion are quite inexplicable, among them the phrase about the sin against the Holy Ghost which can never be forgiven,[11] and the last day which only the Father knows and which is unknown even to the Son.[12] Faced with such places in a commentary, one can without peril report the differing views of different scholars, and even confess outright that one does not understand the passage. But the author of a paraphrase is not allowed the same freedom. Furthermore, some things are expressed in such a way that they refer equally to modern times, in which we see many things that conflict with the institutions of the apostolic age. Granted that the evangelists knew these things in advance by the spirit of prophecy, they cannot be recounted as if the evangelists themselves were speaking, except in a very unnatural and artificial way. My mind was influenced also by the thought that if I

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[6] See *Adagia* II v 6.
[7] John 2:19
[8] Luke 22:36
[9] Matt 16:6–12; Mark 8:15; Luke 12:1
[10] Luke 21:5–33
[11] Matt 12:31–2
[12] Mark 13:32

undertook this task in Matthew only, some people would demand forthwith the same treatment for the other evangelists. If I were to comply with their wishes, I foresaw that I should often have to repeat the same words, wherever in fact the evangelists agree among themselves. Suppose, on the other hand, I were to construct some kind of continuous narrative out of them all;[13] since to explain the discrepancies between the evangelists is like going round and round in some sort of maze, I could not then have maintained the clear texture of a paraphrase.

With these arguments and many others like them I begged to be excused the task that was set before me, and thought I had a good case which must win the day. But the cardinal's eloquence and his authority were too much for me; he took the risk and hazard of the whole business on his own shoulders. I had not the face to stand out any longer against the advice of a man whose wisdom your Majesty is often happy to follow in matters of the greatest moment. At any rate, though I had not entirely accepted the burden, but had only promised that I would try sometime if it could be made to work, he went on to Milan,[14] and promised the Germans in my name that the work would come out this winter. Consequently on my return to Basel I was beset by my German friends, who can be very obstinate when they want something, so that to fulfil the promises he and I had made I finished the work in about a month. Thus he commanded, I obeyed, and I only wish the result may be a happy one for us all; of which I have some hopes, if your Majesty will accept this modest gift which is dedicated to you.

At this point, someone who knows nothing of you but your imperial title will ask: What can a lay prince make of a subject that was more suitably dedicated to abbots or bishops? In the first place, I consider that any honourable gift made to a Christian prince is an appropriate gift. Besides which, while no prince is such a pagan as to find the faith of the gospel foreign to him, emperors are anointed and consecrated expressly that they may either protect or amend or propagate the religion of the gospel. And so the emperor is no teacher of the gospel, but its champion, I quite agree; yet at the same time it is right to have some idea what it is for the defence of which you take up arms. What is more, when I consider how devoted you are in spirit to religion and piety, so that bishops and abbots might find in you a standard or a stimulus to zeal for true religion, I think there is no one to whom this gift might have been offered more appropriately than to your Majesty. And so what I might fitly have dedicated to any Christian prince, and still more fitly to an emperor, I dedicate most fitly of all to Charles. Less appropriate are the gifts offered by those who bring precious jewels, high-mettled horses, hounds for the chase, or barbarous tapestries. Again, since the evangelists wrote down the gospel to be read by all, I do not see why all should not read it, and I have treated it in such a way that even illiterates can understand it. But it will be read with the greatest profit, if each person takes it up with the intention of becoming better than he was before, not of adapting the gospel text to fit his own affections but of correcting his way of life and his desires to match the rule that it lays down. In this work I have mainly followed Origen, the most experienced theologian of all, along with Chrysostom and Jerome, the most generally approved among the orthodox.

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[13] A task subsequently undertaken (but never finished) by Jakob Ziegler; see Ep 1260:200–2, 303–4.

[14] See n5 above.

May that heavenly prince grant you, most august Emperor, to will and to attempt those things which are best, and may he bring your efforts to a happy outcome, so that your great empire, which hitherto has come to you without bloodshed, may be extended or maintained on the same terms. In the mean while, merciful Prince, never forget that no war can be undertaken for so just a cause or fought with such moderation that it will not bring with it a vast horde of crimes and calamities, and further, that the largest share of these evils falls upon harmless people who do not deserve them.

Basel, 13 January 1522

1256 / From Juan Luis Vives — Louvain, 19 January 1522

This is one of many letters from Vives to Erasmus (eg, Epp 1222, 1271, 1281, 1303, 1306, 1362) found in volume 2 of the first collected edition of Vives' works, published at Basel in August 1555 by Nicolaus Episcopius the Younger. The originals are lost. Erasmus' replies to Vives' letters, written from Basel, have disappeared, though the dates of some of them are known. Erasmus replied to this letter on 4 February; see Ep 1271:1.

The great Spanish humanist (Ep 927), intimate friend of Erasmus since 1518, was at this time living at Louvain, where he had a licence to teach privately at the university. He was also working on the edition of Augustine's *De civitate Dei* that was to be included in Erasmus' complete edition of Augustine's works; see lines 108–17.

VIVES TO ERASMUS

Your long-awaited letter[1] arrived a few days ago and, since it came from you,

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1256

[1] Not extant

could not fail to be most welcome; but inasmuch as it said that you are not well[2] and that things are not going as you would wish, it disturbed me, or perhaps I should say distressed me, very much, I do assure you. I wish you had had a talk with me when you were here very lately.[3] I would have told you what I have heard, not that I myself think it either true or likely, but it would give you a better understanding of the attitude of certain persons, which I am sure is not unknown to you; and maybe, if you had heard this from me, you would be less troubled now by the rumours you speak of,[4] which you say in your letter are rife in Germany as well. That you are thought here to be a supporter of Luther is beyond question; but by those same men who, as you well knew when you were here, have a habit of laying at your door anything loaded with envy, hatred, and malice; and they think there is no surer way to undermine your standing and reputation than by coupling you with Luther. Those who make this attempt are not very numerous, but their clamour and their propaganda are unceasing, and they omit nothing that they think may help to prove their point. What they would like most is to convince the emperor and the princes, though, as far as I can make out, they do not work for this openly and directly, but in a roundabout way when they see the chance. At court there are a few theologians from Paris.[5] The only thing they have against you is that they say your utterances on the subject of Luther have always been ambiguous; but they accept you without difficulty, once Luther is suppressed.

There is an Augustinian who has been haled from Antwerp to Brussels these last few days to stand his trial;[6] the Cripple[7] and the Camel[8] have come post-haste to the scene. These men, I hear, have been spreading wicked falsehoods about you; but they were already doing that before Luther was born. No Orestes or Hercules ever raved like these two;[9] but the incredible case is the Stonemason:[10] in everything he says or does he is as mad as a

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[2] Erasmus was seriously ill throughout 1522. Cf Epp 1259, 1264–5, 1267, 1274, 1283, 1302, 1311.

[3] Erasmus had last been in Louvain on the eve of his departure for Basel (28 October 1521); Epp 1242 introduction, 1342:117–28, 151–2.

[4] Cf Epp 1248:54–6, 1249:23–4.

[5] Eg, Luis Coronel (see Epp 1274, 1285:47) and Herman Lethmaet (Ep 1320).

[6] Proost (Ep 1254 n4)

[7] Jacobus Latomus (Ep 934:4n), who was lame

[8] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6)

[9] Orestes was driven mad by the Furies after he murdered his mother Clytemnestra. Hercules, driven mad by Hera, killed his wife Megara and their children.

[10] Latomus

hatter. He would make a better tragic hero than any of the great madmen of antiquity.

Our Herald-angel[11] from Rome is an open-hearted type who keeps neither his own counsel nor other people's. He complains that he has had much to suffer from you, but maintains that all the same he has not discarded his old affection; and he has said that the duke of Alba[12] is annoyed with you because you wrote to Barbier in Spain that the Spaniards are in favour of Luther in hopes of being taken for Christians.[13] This is not credible, for I cannot think you said any such thing; and suppose you did say it as a joke, who could have passed it on to him? And then I have myself spoken to his son,[14] who told me that his father happened to speak of you

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[11] The papal nuncio, Girolamo Aleandro (1480–1542). Aleandro was a brilliant classical scholar who had taught Greek with great success at Paris (1508–13) and then embarked on an ecclesiastical career which in 1516 took him to Rome, where he entered papal service. In the summer of 1520 he was dispatched to the court of Charles v to implement the bull *Exsurge domine* (Ep 1313 n6) in Germany and the Low Countries. In October he supervised the burning of Luther's books in Louvain and Liège. He did his best to have Luther handed over to Rome and to prevent his appearance before the Diet of Worms. Failing at that, he helped the diet formulate the edict of 26 May 1521 that outlawed Luther (Ep 1313 n7). He then accompanied Charles v back to the Netherlands to continue the campaign against heresy there.

Meanwhile, the old friendship between Erasmus and Aleandro (Ep 256) had been transformed into bitter hostility. The publication of Erasmus' very cautious letter to Luther (Ep 980) apparently aroused Aleandro's suspicions that Erasmus was a supporter of the Wittenberg heresiarch (Ep 1167:125–37), suspicions fanned by Erasmus' detractors in Louvain and elsewhere and by Erasmus' evident dislike for the harsh policy embodied in the bull against Luther. In the winter of 1520–1 Aleandro denounced Erasmus in his dispatches to Rome as a worse heretic than Luther and the agitator arousing all Germany to rebellion. Rumours of this, combined with the book burning and the denunciations of Aleandro by Hutten (Epp 1135, 1161), persuaded Erasmus that Aleandro was a very dangerous enemy indeed, bent on discrediting him at both the imperial and the papal courts (Ep 1188). In the autumn of 1521 there was a reconciliation of sorts (Epp 1342:121–66, 1271:68–70, 1281:63–5), but it did not last. By the spring of 1522 Erasmus once more believed that Aleandro was an enemy (Epp 1263:1–3, 1268:67–74), a conviction that persisted despite Aleandro's many subsequent protests that it was not so (cf Ep 1324 introduction).

[12] Fadrique de Toledo (c 1460–1527), an important member of Charles' court and, since 1519, a Knight of the Golden Fleece; cf Ep 1271:140ff.

[13] No letter with these words is extant.

[14] The duke had five sons. The reference here is probably either to Fernando, a member of Charles' court, or Diego, prior of the Order of St John in Castile and Léon.

several times but has never made any mention of that remark; but what his father's views are, he did not know, for he never gave any indication of favouring either party. And a friend of mine who is a herald[15] is here, who would not keep it to himself if he had heard anything. For he did not conceal these two rumours: one, that you had told a bookseller in Antwerp to put Luther's books on sale and not worry about the proclamation,[16] and the other that Luther, when urged to recant,[17] replied that he was not free to do so without consulting the men who had inspired and encouraged him to launch this campaign;[18] he suspected, he said, this meant you among others, and that you alone were named among the first.

This man is the source of all the rumour spread in Germany; but you had seen right through him even while you were here. For those who thought of you in the old days as a follower of Christ owning no allegiance to any other name are still of the same opinion, and Fame, we know, 'gains in strength as she flies.'[19] This is a patch of fog which you, seeing it from a distance, think is immense; but you would change your language if it came closer and you could see and feel it. Nor is it surprising that men should tell such falsehoods about what happens a long way away, when we are told here every day of things being done at Brussels and Mechelen which have never even entered anyone's head. So you ought not to be at all upset by these reports. Those who call you a follower of Luther here and those in Germany who call you the exact opposite are the same people and pursue the same object. They play different parts to suit the theatre and the spectators, but their purpose is to make you unpopular, and as you are impregnable everywhere else, this is the point at which they try to breach your defences.

I wish you would write to your friends at court and tell them of the baseless charges being levelled against you by these men whose enmity is criminal; to Halewijn[20] for instance, and to the emperor's confessor[21] if he is at all a friend of yours, for he carries no less weight at court than Christ himself. I myself shall join them, once I am finished with Augustine,[22]and

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[15] Unidentified

[16] On 20 March 1521 a proclamation ordering the burning of Luther's books was published in Charles' name in Mechelen. For Erasmus' visits to Antwerp after this proclamation, see Epp 1199, 1205, 1302, 1342.

[17] Presumably at the Diet of Worms in April 1521

[18] No such remark is recorded in the reports of Luther's appearance before the Diet of Worms; see WA VII 814–87.

[19] Virgil *Aeneid* 4.175

[20] Ep 1269

[21] Jean Glapion (Ep 1275)

[22] See lines 108–17, 148–62.

there I shall radiate enough heat to dissolve much of this fog; for he[23] does not rate me the lowest of the low, and I am taking steps to join Ferdinand's household.[24] But keep this to yourself for fear that, if it gets out, it may be prevented. As for the Angel,[25] if you could at a suitable opportunity give him an honourable mention, you would make him entirely yours; for he has complained to me that you never thanked him for the help he gave you against Zúñiga in that matter of the *za*[26] – I expect you know what I mean. You see the sort of thing he minds about – or rather, the sort of opinion he has of you, if he desires praise from you so much. But the other lot are biting all the more viciously because death approaches, as some wild beasts do; for there is no doubt that they will not enjoy the perennial youth which is so entirely yours, the youth I mean that comes from the humanities, and from Christ.

The Stonemason,[27] they say, is unpopular with his colleagues; he gives himself such airs since he got the entrée to this house of the bishop of Cambrai,[28] and they think he must be very influential because he follows that young man around everywhere. What shadows they are frightened of! – as though either the man he follows had any influence or any power that his master might have were his to use. Your purpose is Christian, as it always was, and beyond a doubt Christ has prepared for you a great and plenteous reward for it, seeing what poor thanks you get from men; though, as far as that goes, their language will moderate or grow more hostile according to the new pope's[29] attitude towards you. But tell me this: Do you wish to refute the common lot of all good men? In Christ's name, my dear Erasmus, I do beg you most urgently not to distress yourself, not to bring on old age before its time, by taking these worthless rumours so deeply to heart. A man who has Christ himself, and all men of good will, and a clear conscience so thoroughly on his side cannot easily be hurt by wicked men. You have done nothing wrong, which is the one thing a good man must achieve in life, and it is not your business what end God may appoint for you.

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[23] Ie, Glapion

[24] Since 1519 Vives had had hopes of becoming tutor to Archduke Ferdinand, the emperor's brother. Erasmus had been offered the post but declined it, recommending Vives instead. See Epp 917 introduction, and 1271:138–9.

[25] Aleandro; see n11 above.

[26] In annotating Matt 4:1, Erasmus had observed that a reading of *zabulum* instead of *diabolum* in a manuscript of Hilary was perhaps a copyist's error. Zúñiga, in his *Annotationes contra Erasmum* (Ep 1260 n36), pointed out that the form *zabulum* was common in Hilary and other Fathers and suggested a derivation from the Hebrew *zebul* (as in 'Beelzebul'). Aleandro then indicated to Erasmus that *za* is often used in Greek for *dia*. In the first edition of his reply to Zúñiga (Ep 1277 n1), Erasmus argued that the influence of Greek usage was the more probable explanation of *zabulum*, but did not give Aleandro credit for his assistance in the matter. Doubtless as a result of this hint from Vives, Erasmus inserted a suitable acknowledgment in the enlarged second edition of February 1522 (LB IX 295D). Cf Ep 1334:889.

[27] Latomus; see n7 above.

[28] Latomus was the teacher of Robert de Croy (1500–56), who in 1519 had succeeded his brother Guillaume (Ep 628:70n) as bishop of Cambrai. At the time of his election, Robert was not yet in higher orders and was still pursuing his studies at Louvain. He was ordained in 1529 and assumed his duties as bishop from that time. In 1546 he was a delegate at the Council of Trent.

But why do I say this to you of all people? Warham[30] and Thale[31] and Maurice[32] attend my lectures and are my dear friends; the first two will be the more dear for what you say of them, and this last one too, if that is possible.

As for Augustine,[33] I have finished thirteen books. Seven are revised and copied out, six others have been at press for some time now; and all the time one goes on adding. It was rash of me to give myself so little time, without considering how long and diverse and recondite the work would be, so full is it of questions in history, mythology, natural and moral philosophy, and theology, as you are well aware. I would set out all the principles I am following if you were not the person I am writing to. I beg you not to take it amiss if the book reaches you later than you expected, provided that when the work appears, it is not wholly unworthy of Augustine.

You cut me to the quick with that remark of yours, 'I shall not weary you so often with my demands.' You appear to be reluctant to give me good advice in the future about the object and profit of my studies; for the encouragement you give me, and even what you call your demands, are simply nothing but an incentive to spur me on to do great things when otherwise I should fall behind. And do you call this making demands? What will you call the instruction a teacher gives his pupils? Do you want to be so polite to your friends and disciples that you will make them miserable, when they see that you are treating them like people you hardly know or people who are as good as you are? After all I have done and said, are you still not convinced that you can do nothing I could find wearisome, except when you are afraid that you may weary me? This is like the heading of your letter: 'To my admirable friend,' and not only 'admirable' but (if you please) 'highly admirable.' If in future you allow your Johannes[34] or your Lieven[35] to write like that, I shall refuse delivery of the letter; if anybody is allowed to think me admirable, it is not Erasmus. By all the laws of friendship and all the kindnesses you have done me, and anything I may have been able to do for you, I do beg you not to be so distant with me.

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[29] Ie, Adrian VI (Ep 1304), elected in January 1522

[30] Probably Richard Warham (d 1545), who, however, did not matriculate at the University of Louvain until October 1524. Perhaps a relative of archbishop William Warham (Ep 188), he received holy orders in 1527 and held several benefices in England.

[31] Probably the William Thale to whom Ep 1224 was addressed, rather than a younger kinsman as Allen suggested. Thale matriculated at Louvain in December 1522, though he had arrived earlier (cf Ep 1303:59).

[32] Probably Maurice Birchinshaw (documented 1511–35), who had taught at St Paul's School, London, where one of his pupils was Thomas Winter, son of Cardinal Wolsey. In August 1518 both Winter and Birchinshaw as his tutor matriculated at Louvain. Birchinshaw subsequently pursued an ecclesiastical career in England.

[33] Vives was working on an edition of the *De civitate Dei*, for which Erasmus wrote an introductory letter (Ep 1309).

I am delighted that you had such a reception in Germany, not of course that I found anything new in that. I am glad too that you have Velius[36] with you, whose birthday poem[37] addressed to you exists (I think it's his) and is in my opinion very successful. Please give him my greetings, and Buschius[38] too, and Rhenanus,[39] if he is with you. Maurice sends his very best wishes, and so does John Clement,[40] who will not go to Italy before next spring. He says he was very sorry that you set off for Basel without his knowledge; for had he known, he would have given you his company and spent the whole winter with you.

I was negotiating to hire somebody, when very conveniently Franz the bookseller[41] told me that he would very shortly be sending you some books, and that if I wanted anything carried, he would add it to the rest of the parcel. So I gave instructions that he should be entrusted with the seven books[42] I have already revised. Froben can begin to print them, if you approve; and I will send ten others – as far as the seventeenth – for certain before Lent.[43] The remainder by Franz himself, when he goes to the

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[34] Perhaps Hovius, Erasmus' servant. Cf Epp 867:189n, 902.

[35] Lieven Algoet of Ghent (Ep 1091), another of Erasmus' servants

[36] Ep 1252 n1

[37] *Genethliacon Erasmi,* written in 1517; see Epp 548–9.

[38] Hermannus Buschius (Ep 1291 n4)

[39] Beatus Rhenanus (Ep 327)

[40] Ep 388:185n. Clement was at this time studying medicine in Louvain.

[41] Franz Birckmann (Ep 1254 n3)

[42] Ie, of Augustine

[43] 5 March–19 April 1522

Frankfurt fair. From those seven you will be able to discover, if you have time to look at anyone else's work, what principle of commentary I have followed; though the rest, apart from the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eighteenth, contain less matter and need less work, because they are not so diverse, and a great part of what he[44] deals with in them is obvious to anyone. Will you please see that they print several hundred copies of this work separate from the rest of Augustine; for there will be many studious people who will be either unwilling or unable to buy the whole of Augustine, either because they will not want it or because they have not enough money. For you know that the devotees of more elegant literature read practically no other work of Augustine except this. Farewell again and again, my best of teachers.

Louvain, 19 January 1522

1257 / To Conradus Goclenius Basel, 6 February 1521/2

This letter was first published by Paulus Merula in his *Vita Des. Erasmi* (Leiden: T. Basson 1607). The year-date in the text (line 21) cannot be correct, since Erasmus had not yet moved to Basel in February 1521. Allen chose 1522 because of the resemblance of lines 6–11 to Epp 1244:41–2 and 1258:30–2 and because of the expectation (line 12) of Erasmus' return to Louvain.

On Conradus Goclenius, professor of Latin at the Collegium Trilingue, see Ep 1209.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CONRADUS GOCLENIUS, GREETING

I am very fond of Melchior,[1] and wish him all the favour of the Muses. That's the spirit! In this way he will become known to the right people, and secure a position for himself. He has no reason to think of retreat, but of going forward. Only he should be careful not to give malice any foothold. With Ludwig[2] you should keep up your friendship on courteous terms. If you

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[44] Ie, Augustine

1257

[1] Melchior Vianden, of Vianden near Luxembourg (d 1535), was a teacher at the College of the Castle. The reference here is apparently to a call to teach elsewhere, perhaps at Tournai. Not until 1525, however, did Vianden move to Tournai to teach at the new, and short-lived, trilingual college.

[2] Probably Ludovicus Carinus (Ep 920), who lived with Erasmus as his *famulus* at this time

write to Nesen,[3] write with some caution. He has been certainly the most unfortunate of my friends.[4] He keeps nothing to himself, and cannot discern what to say, and when.[5] He is no benefit to the humanities, nor to the Lutheran cause, nor to his own pupils. The only wise man is he who can match his wisdom to the times we live in. One can hardly trust oneself.

I hope to be with you in Lent,[6] unless prevented by disorders here which seem imminent.[7] I was delighted with Verdun's[8] letter, if only he has sufficient influence. I thought of adding it to my book, but there were reasons against it.[9] I wonder that you gave Hilarius[10] a gold piece; he had enough journey-money from me, and from Pieter Gillis[11] on my account.

I would have written more, but felt I knew too little about the man who brings you this. Good news about Campen.[12] It would be fair if now in my old age I could have a share in your successes, but evidently like Hercules I have laboured for the benefit of others. Farewell.

Basel, 6 February 1521

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[3] Wilhelm Nesen (c 1493–1524) was a graduate of the University of Basel, a teacher, and a former corrector for the Froben press (1515–16). He was head of the new Latin school at Frankfurt-am-Main from 1520 to 1523, when he went to Wittenberg and joined the reformers, only to perish in a boating accident the following year.

[4] Cf Allen Ep 1729:1–3.

[5] This passage clearly implies that Nesen was guilty of far more serious offences than the sloppy editing of Seneca complained of in the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A:447–63). Erasmus apparently blamed him for the ill-timed release of the *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* (CWE 7 330–47), and in a letter of 2 March 1532 to Martin Bucer (Allen Ep 2615:184–7), Erasmus seems to say that Nesen had been responsible for the publication of the *Julius exclusus*.

[6] 5 March–19 April 1522

[7] The first of the Hapsburg-Valois wars, which had broken out in 1521; see Ep 1283 n3.

[8] Perhaps Antoine de la Marck (Ep 956), abbot of the Cluniac abbey of Beaulieu, Verdun, who may have repeated his promise of some preferment for Erasmus; see Ep 1065.

[9] Erasmus may have contemplated printing the letter after Ep 956 in the edition of the paraphrases which Froben published in February 1522. But the abbot's reputation for rapacity and licentiousness – he was stabbed to death in 1523 by a landowner whose daughter he had wronged – made this inadvisable.

[10] Hilarius Bertolph of Ledeberg near Ghent (d 1533) was in Erasmus' service 1522–4.

[11] Ep 184

[12] Jan van Campen (1491–1538), professor of Hebrew at the Collegium Trilingue in Louvain, 1520–31

1258 / To a Friend Basel, 9 February 1522

This letter, first published by Allen, survives in a sixteenth-century copy in the Stads- of Athenaeumbibliothek Deventer. The recipient, obviously a close friend, may have been Maarten Davidts (Ep 1254).

In lines 6–13 Erasmus reports what he has heard of the somewhat tumultuous reform movement which took place in Wittenberg in the autumn and winter of 1521–2, during Luther's confinement in the Wartburg (April 1521–March 1522). The principal leaders of the movement were Luther's colleague in the faculty of theology, Andreas Karlstadt (Ep 911:61n), and Luther's fellow Augustinian, Gabriel Zwilling. Their zeal and impatience, expressed in passionate sermons, led to much confusion and disorder, which finally brought Luther back to Wittenberg to impose a more cautious and conservative pace upon the Reformation in that town. Erasmus had evidently not yet heard of the more disorderly aspects of the Wittenberg movement, such as the image smashing which took place in January and early February.

ERASMUS TO A FRIEND, GREETING

The wagons to which Franz[1] was minded to entrust my box[2] are now here. I should have been glad if it had arrived, but am content provided it is in safe keeping; do not send it unless I give the word. I long to know the rest of the story about the prior of the Augustinians.[3] Oecolampadius[4] has thrown off his cowl and left the monastery, because he thought the duke of Bavaria[5] was threatening Altomünster in any case. I hear he has fallen out badly with

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1258

1 Birckmann (Ep 1254 n3)

2 Cf Ep 1275:10–12.

3 Proost; see Epp 1254:7–14, 1256:25–7.

4 In 1518 Oecolampadius (Epp 224:30n, 354:6n) took his DD at Basel and accepted a call to be cathedral preacher in Augsburg, where he became deeply perplexed by the phenomenon of Luther and the controversies surrounding him. In April 1520 he sought refuge from the fray by entering the Brigittine monastery of Altomünster near Munich, only to emerge in January 1522 as an active proponent of the Reformation. He became chaplain to Franz von Sickingen at the Ebernberg (Ep 1308 n7), but in November 1522 he returned to Basel to spend the rest of his life as professor, preacher, and leader of the Basel Reformation.

5 There were, in fact, two ruling dukes of Bavaria at the time: Wilhelm IV (1508–50) in Munich and Ludwig X (1514–45) in Landshut. Both were ardent champions of Catholic orthodoxy, which they sought to uphold in their *Religionsmandat* of 5 March 1522. See also the following note.

Eck.[6] Hence all those tears.[7] Philippus Melanchthon is acting as a public preacher.[8] Justus Jonas has married,[9] and Karlstadt[10] too, besides many others. Of the Augustinian monks, some have moved elsewhere and some have changed their dress and are working with their hands. There are almost no services there now.[11] In the great church there is only one mass and a sermon. The common people communicate almost daily in both kinds.[12] Wittenberg has been visited by two fullers, remarkably well informed but on a few points disagreeing with Luther. They claim to have a spirit of prophecy.[13]

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[6] Eck (Ep 769) had reacted with threats and fulminations to Oecolampadius' *Iudicium de doctore Martino Luthero*, published in Leipzig c December 1520. Even more ominous was the reaction of the nuncio Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11) and the emperor's confessor, Glapion (Ep 1275), to the *Paradoxon, quod non sit onerosa christianis confessio*, published in Augsburg in April 1521. Aleandro denounced Oecolampadius to Rome as 'even worse than Luther,' and Glapion urged the dukes of Bavaria to take action against him. These threats caused severe tensions in the monastic community at Altomünster, which Oecolampadius decided to resolve by fleeing. See Ernst Staehelin *Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads* Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 21 (Leipzig 1939; repr New York and London 1971) 156–7.

[7] In the weeks after he fled the monastery, Oecolampadius' letters, one of which is known to have been addressed to Erasmus, were rather despondent in tone; BAO 1 nos 119, 120.

[8] There is no evidence that Melanchthon was functioning as a preacher at this time. He was, however, a conspicuous member of the commission that tried to bring order to the reform movement in Wittenberg by means of the Wittenberg Ordinance of 24 January 1522, which was subsequently disallowed by the elector.

[9] Justus Jonas (Ep 876), whose wedding Melanchthon reported in a letter of 5 February to Haugold von Einsiedel; CR 1 546

[10] On 19 January 1522 Karlstadt married the fifteen-year-old daughter of an impoverished nobleman of Segrehn, near Wittenberg.

[11] On 13 October 1521 the Wittenberg Augustinians, under the leadership of Gabriel Zwilling, ceased to celebrate mass when their prior refused to permit reforms. In November the friars began to leave the cloister and by March, when Luther returned, only the prior was left.

[12] On Christmas Day 1521, Karlstadt celebrated communion in both kinds at All Saints Church, without vestments and speaking the words of institution in German. The Wittenberg Ordinance of 24 January 1522, issued jointly by the university and the town council (cf n8 above), expressly permitted communion in both kinds.

[13] Towards the end of December 1521, three men who came to be called the 'Zwickau prophets' arrived in Wittenberg from Zwickau, a textile and mining town in eastern Saxony. Two of them, Nikolaus Storch and Thomas Drescher, were weavers. A third, Marcus Thomae (Stübner) had been a student in

They say that in Switzerland a figure of the Crucified painted on canvas has streamed with blood, nor could it be stanched until the Blessed Virgin, who is painted on the same canvas, put her hand to the wound in the Lord's side. The other four wounds had already ceased to bleed in response to the prayers of the common people. Eventually a hard horny substance grew out of the ribs of the Crucified.

It is, however, well established that here in Basel a girl produces coals in plenty from her eyes. She is barely twelve years old, and brings them forth mainly at night. They are perfectly real coals, and come out one after another, being picked off by the bystanders. But this could occur, I am inclined to think, by nature.

I relapsed into an illness worst than the last, and am even now not really recovered.[14] It brings me so low that I do not greatly desire to live much longer; such is the world I see around me. Beware of letters from Germany, and be in no hurry to reply to them. It is dangerous to trust them:[15] this I know only too well. The bishop of Basel,[16] his coadjutor,[17] and many other people are very kind to me. But I must leave Germany because of the stink of the stoves.[18]

Farewell, my dear X, and give my greetings to my friends.

Basel, 9 February 1522

1259 / To Willibald Pirckheimer — Basel, 12 February [1522]

On Pirckheimer, see Ep 318. On his recent difficulties with Rome because of charges that he was a Lutheran, see Epp 1182 and 1244. This letter was first published in the *Pirckheimeri Opera*.

Greeting, my honoured friend. I came here in order to be at hand while my

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Wittenberg. They called themselves prophets and apostles, claimed direct inspiration by the Holy Spirit, issued apocalyptic warnings, and criticized infant baptism. Their brief stay in Wittenberg added a bit to the confusion and disorder there during Luther's absence, but was of no real consequence.

[14] See Ep 1256 n2.

[15] Cf Epp 1257:6–9; also 1225:383–7, 1244:41–2, 1278:10–13.

[16] Christoph von Utenheim (Ep 1332)

[17] Nikolaus von Diesbach (1478–1550) of Bern, canon of the Basel chapter since 1516, and coadjutor to the bishop (see preceding note) since 1519. Erasmus was grateful to Nikolaus for repeated gifts of Burgundy wine, which caused a dramatic improvement in his health; Epp 1342:504–9, 1353:284–99.

[18] Erasmus' dislike of stoves (as opposed to fireplaces) is frequently mentioned in the letters of this period; see Epp 1248:13–14, 1249:24–5, 1259:2–3, 1264:10–12, 1302:37–9.

things were printing,[1] and immediately fell seriously ill from the stink of the stoves[2] – the same sort of trouble from which I suffered last time I was here. I had got better, but since then have suffered another attack worse than before.

For a long time now I have been waiting to see what will be the upshot of this sorry business over Luther. Unquestionably some spirit is at work in this affair; whether it be of God, I do not know.[3] I, who have never supported Luther, except in so far as one supports a man by urging him towards better things, am a heretic to both sides. Among our own people, a few who have other reasons to dislike me are actually trying to persuade the emperor that I am a leader of the rebels,[4] for no better reason than my failure to publish against Luther. Luther's party in their public utterance tear me to pieces as a Pelagian,[5] because they think I give more weight than they do to free will. Am I not indeed treated very prettily?

I have finished a paraphrase on St Matthew, encouraged by the cardinal of Sion.[6] Best wishes, my distinguished friend. Give my greetings to your sisters,[7] and to any who love the teaching of the Gospels.

Your sincere friend Erasmus
Basel, 12 February
To the honourable Willibald Pirckheimer, town councillor of Nürnberg

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1260 / From Jakob Ziegler — Rome, 16 February 1522

The autograph of this letter is MS Rehd 254.167 in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library of Wrocław. The letter was first published as Ep 13 in Enthoven.

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1259

[1] Erasmus' Paraphrase on Matthew (line 16) and a new edition of the *Colloquia* (Ep 1262) were in press at this time.

[2] See Ep 1258 n18.

[3] See Acts 5:38–9.

[4] Cf Epp 1195, 1278; also 1256 n11.

[5] This charge (cf Epp 1225:307–8, 1275:31) was originally based on some passages in the *Enchiridion*. News of the Wittenbergers' accusation probably reached Erasmus via Beatus Rhenanus (BRE Ep 206). Luther's first communication to Erasmus had been the suggestion that he should read Augustine's treatises against the Pelagians (Ep 501:49–62). Subsequently, Erasmus' paraphrase of the ninth chapter of Romans became the focus of criticism on this point (Epp 1265:14–19, 1342:1022–78).

[6] See Ep 1255 introduction and lines 23–9, 71–6.

[7] Pirckheimer's sisters Charitas (d 1532) and Clara (d 1533), both highly learned women, became in turn abbess of the convent of St Clare in Nürnberg.

Jakob Ziegler (c 1470–1549) of Landau in Bavaria studied at Ingolstadt, where he became deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy. In 1500 he left Ingolstadt and nothing is known of him until March 1504, when he was at Cologne. He then spent time in Vienna (1504–8), Moravia (1508–11), and Budapest (1514–20), where he made the connections which secured his invitation to Rome by Leo x (lines 141–4). During his stay in Rome, 1521–5, he was employed at the curia in an unknown capacity and did what he could to defend Erasmus' interests there. After leaving Rome, Ziegler was for a time a partisan of the Reformation, but by 1534 had become an Erasmian Catholic once again.

Cordial greetings. As an old friend of yours, whose affection for you started before you made a name for yourself with works as learned as they are devout,[1] I ought perhaps to begin this belated letter with elaborate compliments, as many people do when they write to you, but my talents are so few and so provincial that I must refrain from that sort of formal opening. Secondly, I ought to apologize for neglecting you these many years; but I do not wish to labour this point either. If I have kept silent, and yet have done all I could to back you up, this silent support ought to please you all the more, for it means that you can take me as evidence to assure yourself that God has left many thousands of men who are devoted to you and have not bowed the knee to Baal.[2]

This letter will, I suppose, find you in Basel, and I very much hope so, for I am sure that there you will be working out something for the public benefit of Christendom. What I want to see is your new edition of Augustine,[3] for the text we have is much disfigured, having been sadly defaced with their barbarous nonsense by unknown Englishmen[4] and men like de Mayronnes[5] who know nothing. On this point I find the judgment of the elder Amerbach[6] sadly at fault. So I long to see that great author cleaned up and restored to his proper grandeur. If I cannot hope at the present time

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1260

[1] It is not known when Erasmus and Ziegler became acquainted. Perhaps it was in Louvain in 1502–3, before Ziegler's residence in Cologne. That would have been before Erasmus' fame was established.

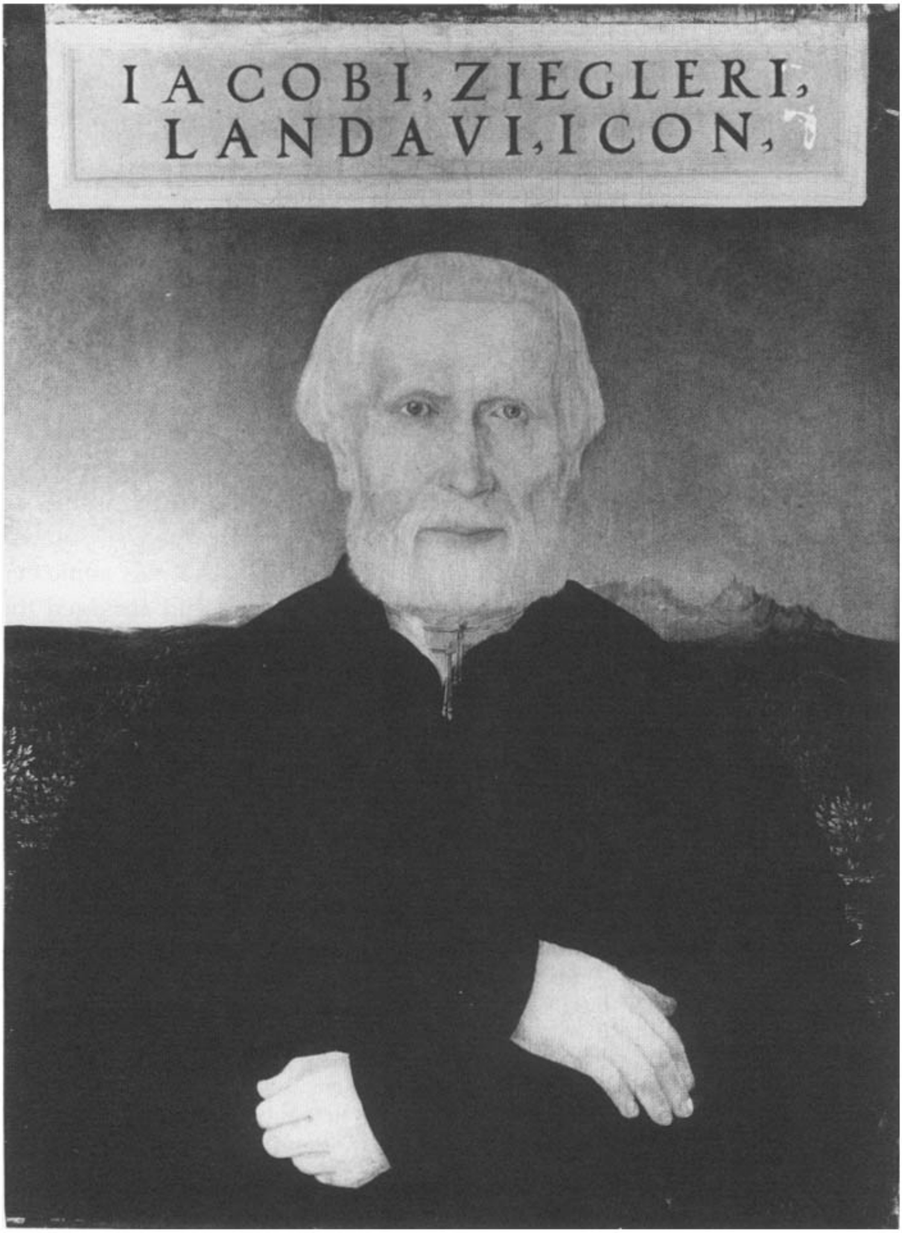
[2] 1 Kings 19:18; Rom 11:4

[3] See Ep 1309 introduction.

[4] Such as those mentioned in Ep 1271 n6

[5] François (?) de Mayronnes (d 1327), well-known commentator on Augustine

[6] Johann Amerbach (c 1430–1513), famous Basel printer who in 1506 brought out an edition of Augustine in which he relied heavily on medieval commentators


IACOBI, ZIEGLERI,
LANDAVI, ICON,

Jakob Ziegler
Portrait by Wolf Huber
Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

for your commentaries on Paul,[7] although they have been promised us so often and dangled before us, the reasons are as clear to me from guesswork as they are to you from intimate knowledge. We shall welcome them when they see the light posthumously. In this, in fact, as in many other ways, I feel somehow what is in your mind.

In your Cyprian you regret the loss of Pontius the deacon.[8] This is at Wrocław, in the possession of either the bishop or the chapter, among Cyprian's works, a very fine manuscript. You should write to a canon of Wrocław called Stanislaus Sauer,[9] a good scholar, if he is still alive, or perhaps better and with more confidence to the chapter, which cannot die. I saw the book when it was lent for a time to Simon Schönfeld,[10] a doctor of medicine, learned in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin and a long-standing friend of our dear Reuchlin. This gives you, my dear Erasmus, a way to trace the volume, and it is worth pursuing with all diligence, for on this subject Pontius rivalled such eminent authorities as Cornelius, Athanasius, or Jerome. He equalled in every respect the story of the martyrdom, if you will allow the word, of Pliny in the eruption of Vesuvius.[11] And may some evil genius repay as he deserves the bungler[12] who defiled and abridged the work, bringing down the honour of the martyr and his story to the level of the filth with which he was himself defiled. This scandalous conduct I attribute to a Frenchman; for it was the French who, in a ridiculous battle of wits against the ancients in every department of learning, banded together

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[7] See Ep 1341A:1332–5.

[8] In his edition of Cyprian (Froben 1520), Erasmus had included a *Passio beati Cypriani episcopi Carthaginensis, per Pontium eius diaconum aedita*. In both the preface to the volume (Ep 1000:43–8) and in an 'annotatiuncula' to the *Passio*, Erasmus voiced doubt that the rather brief *Passio*, which filled slightly more than one folio, was in fact the complete and authentic text of the substantial *Vita Cypriani* which, according to Jerome (*De viris illustribus* 100), Pontius had written. What Erasmus did not know, and never found out, was that the *Passio* that he thought had been derived from Pontius was actually an epitome of the account of Cyprian's martyrdom in the *Acta proconsularia*. The authentic texts of Pontius' *Vita* and of the *Acta proconsularia*, first published in the seventeenth century, are found in PL 3 (Paris 1886) 1541–66 and in CSEL III-3 xc–cxiv.

[9] Stanislaus Sauer (c 1469–1535) of Lwówek (Löwenberg) in Silesia, was a doctor of canon law (Padua), a canon at Wrocław, a historian, and an ardent student of Jerome.

[10] No such name is known. Schottenloher (*Ziegler* 55 n3) conjectures that the Leipzig physician and Greek scholar, Christoph Sonfelt (Schönfeld) may be intended.

[11] Pliny *Epistles* 6.16 and 20

[12] Ie, the person responsible for the truncated *Passio* included in Erasmus' edition of Cyprian; see n8 above.

to wipe out the best authors entirely or reduce them to ignorant epitomes, or made a scandalous use of their names to foist on our own day ignorant fables, worse than any Iberian trumpery.[13] In the authentic copy I spoke of, a passage runs: 'He stood on the line (*ad lineam*).' The bungler, as I keep calling him, replaced this with: 'He stood in a linen shift (*in lineis*).'[14] And his mistake is more excusable here than elsewhere; for having read that Cyprian was stripped of his outer garments, he was almost invited by the logic of the situation to bring the saint on stage in a shift. But this is flimsy, while the other reading retains its true inherent weight, telling how the martyr was lined up among the guilty, and called forward out of the line to receive his punishment. I have enjoyed pointing this out to you, so that you can pass whatever critical judgment on the passage you see fit.

It would be worth while, my dear Erasmus, should you think it right to devote your efforts and our friend Froben's to the publication of something which you know still needs the finishing touches, to make your desire known to scholars here a good while before in a published letter. You would find, I hope, in some unexpected quarter an honest man who would come forward to lighten your burden.

I made a copy long ago, in Regensburg, in the library at St Emmeram's,[15] of St Jerome's commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. I still remember that much was to be found there in the prolegomena which is lacking in ordinary copies. Likewise in the commentary on Matthew I feel something is lacking which I think I read there. It is likely that this contrast of plenty and poverty in the way of readings is to be discovered in many other passages. I beg you of your kindness to send a suitable person there who can collate the whole of Jerome with those copies. If you get nothing else out of it, which I will never believe, at least you will have the very great satisfaction of having weighed your correction of the text against manuscripts of venerable antiquity transferred to that place by some emperor from an uncorrupted library somewhere in Italy.

In Rohr, a very well known monastery of canons in Lower Bavaria,[16] there is a manuscript neither large nor ancient, containing under the name of Jerome three expositions of each of the evangelists, which are short, and suited not so much to instruct a reader as to refresh an understanding of the text which he has acquired from elsewhere. I can give you no further opinion on the work, for this is a memory of long ago, but they are sure to be full of meat and well expressed if the title tells truth about the author. I leave it to you with your usual energy to arrange for a more up-to-date sampling of this work, in case by good luck you can make Jerome more complete.

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[13] A favourite phrase of Jerome; *Adagia* II iii 9.

[14] This passage occurs in the *Acta proconsularia*, not in Pontius' *Vita* (see n8 above). The Wrocław manuscript was apparently a copy of the former, falsely identified as Pontius' *Vita*, as in the case of the truncated version published by Erasmus. It appears that Erasmus never saw the Wrocław manuscript. At any rate, he made no changes in the *Passio* or the accompanying 'annotatiuncula' in subsequent editions of Cyprian.

[15] A famous Benedictine monastery founded in the seventh century

[16] Twenty-nine kilometres south of Regensburg, founded in 1133

There have arrived in Rome two champions of the Holy See, whose one object this autumn is to maintain it in the status from which certain persons are working to dethrone it, but they also have hopes of thereby carrying off rewards and benefices – in fact, of ending up rich by informing against other men's lives and fortunes. One of them,[17] as you know, established long ago by his confrontations in the schools[18] that he was a sophist supreme and invincible. Recently too he has often disputed in Rome at the Sapienza,[19] and has aroused general astonishment by his vehemence, his way of tossing his head and swaying his body and using expressive gestures and counting off the points of his case on his fingers and, on top of all this, by his great gaping mouth. And so we expect to secure any and every result from a man who, under the pretext of a strict theological definition, seems once and for all and in public to have established a doctrine entirely contrary to the Christian philosophy – that money-lenders have a perfect right to exact interest.[20] Some wags say he is the darling of Germany, and have put all the blame on you Germans. For my own part too, except that 'From one villain learn to know them all'[21] is so misleading, I should reluctantly accept this slur on a whole nation.

The other man[22] is a different proposition. The way he walks and talks and his expression and his whole air seem designed to give an impression of modesty. He shows also a skill in impersonation while engaged in putting his case such as you would scarcely find in great authorities. He is thought to be quite free from any attempt to ingratiate himself or pursue his own advantage with men in power, and from feelings of hatred and resentment

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[17] Johann Eck (Ep 769), who was in Rome October 1521–February 1522

[18] As, for example, at the Leipzig Disputation with Luther in 1519

[19] Ie, the University of Rome, founded in 1303

[20] Eck was a champion of the view that the old ban on interest had to be lifted and that five per cent was a reasonable rate.

[21] Virgil *Aeneid* 2.65–6

[22] Johannes Fabri (Ep 386), vicar-general of the diocese of Constance, who had been in Rome since November 1521; see Karl Schottenloher 'Johann Fabri in Rom, nach einem Berichte Jakob Zieglers' *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 5 (1908) 31–47.

towards his opponents such as might make him less trustworthy in practice; and all he thinks or says or writes seems to relate to single-minded defence of the truth, to an apostolic rule of life, and to the opinions and beliefs of the ancient commentators. Thus equipped, he has from time to time submitted books to Rome in support of the standards of conduct and the opinions we hold,[23] on which in this generation the essence of Christianity hinges, whether we like it or not. By this policy he made people wish to see him long before his arrival; and this was even more remarkable, inasmuch as he was in no hurry, though more than once invited by the powers that be, knowing that his arrival would excite more respect and secure him even greater situations the more he showed himself a serious character whose company was not to be had for the asking. Nor was it his worldly wisdom that let him down. Fortune he found on his doorstep and had beguiled almost into his bosom; but the chance that sways human affairs overthrew all his hopes. At the moment of his arrival the aged Leo the Tenth breathed his last.[24]

Now pray learn from a single example the wicked opinions which these men cannot tolerate. Somewhere in your part of the world[25] some hundreds of Christians celebrated the sacrament in both kinds. This the man reported to us, and made a great thing of it, as though they had committed sacrilege. We received this as something appalling, we shuddered at it, we took it to be a crime which every pen and every critic must condemn, presumably because they violated the traditions of our forefathers and the clear policy of the Scriptures: 'Verily, verily I say unto you, unless you have eaten the flesh of the Son of man and have drunk his blood, you shall not have life in you'[26] – and this statement is four times repeated.[27] And in another passage: 'Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples and said: "Take and eat this: this is my body." And he took the cup and gave thanks and gave it to them saying: "All of you drink of this."'[28] And Paul: 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.'[29] And in this passage the same rite is referred to so often. These are the weapons with which they enter the contest, these champions of public morality and of what have long, and

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[23] Fabri's *Opus adversus dogmata Martini Lutheri* was published at Rome (M. Silber) in 1522.

[24] 1 December 1521

[25] Ie, in Germany; cf Ep 1258 n12.

[26] John 6:53

[27] In verses 54–8

[28] Matt 26:26–7

[29] 1 Cor 11:28

wrongly, been received opinions. How true it is that your really religious man is not the one who is full of holy reading and immersed in holy things, but he who has his eye single and his spirit lowly and whose mind is taught by God!

I arrived in Rome last year precisely on the first of March, having been invited to leave Hungary by Leo the Tenth, whose knowledge of my existence came from Cardinal Ippolito d'Este,[30] who held the richest of all the sees in Hungary,[31] where he had learned to know and like my work. I made my bow to the pope with a book of mine on the heresy of the Picards,[32] among whom I had previously spent three years.[33] I had rushed this out on another occasion, when I was in a hurry to satisfy the bishop of Olomouc,[34] who was asking me for it. Being a hasty piece of work, there was much in it that would not do – more material than was required for a reasonable balance of the whole, arranged in many places very badly, and more warmth in the disputations than the standards of a reasonable Christian or a reasonable man would allow. I made this mistake because I knew from experience how far their *Oratio*[35] differed from their opinions and their way of life. But this is inexcusable in any argument in which you are keen to bring your opponent over to your point of view – to start by embittering a man who might be willing to yield to your case, so that he remembers how you hurt him and keeps off, nor can he have any ground in common with a man who has so bitterly attacked him.

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[30] C 1478–1530, brother of the duke of Ferrara and cardinal from 1492

[31] The archbishopric of Gran (1487–97). The cardinal would have learned to know Ziegler in 1517, during a later visit to Hungary.

[32] *Contra heresim Valdensium ... libri quinque* (Leipzig: M. Loter 1512); summary and analysis in Schottenloher *Ziegler* 23–4. The heresy so vehemently attacked in this book was that of the Bohemian Brethren, also known as the Unity of the Brethren (*Unitas fratrum*), a Hussite sect which in 1467 had formally separated itself from the mainline Hussites (known as Utraquists or Calixtines) and spread rapidly in the following decades. The Brethren were not Picards (Piccards, Pickharts, etc), an earlier group of libertine pantheists, long since extinguished, but the name was commonly applied to them by hostile critics. Nor were the Brethren, strictly speaking, Waldensians (Ep 1324A n1), although they had much in common with the Waldensians and had tried unsuccessfully to merge with them in Germany. In the course of the Reformation, the Brethren became Protestants; those in Bohemia merged with the Lutherans in 1542, those in Poland united with the Calvinists in 1555.

[33] 1508–11, in Moravia

[34] Stanislaus Thurzo (Epp 1242, 1267, 1272). Ziegler's book was dedicated to him.

[35] *Oratio excusatoria atque satisfactiva*, an official defence of themselves issued by the Bohemian Brethren in 1504; see Allen, Ep 1154:8n.

In Rome, when I was there, your enemy[36] and I were guests at the table of a man who is very highly thought of, one of the bishops;[37] and there, when we had finished dinner, the conversation turned on Luther, and he was attacked from various points of view. The prevailing opinion was that he was a wencher and a drunkard – two vices of the kind men were thought to suffer from as a rule in Germany. After him, you took the stage, but not playing your proper part. Your enemy uttered a bitter laugh on hearing that the majority of those who appreciate your religious work in Christ greeted you as a rising sun.[38] A letter of his own was then read, or perhaps it was some sort of preface to another work,[39] in which passages were selected for hostile comment where you attack sham monks, lifeless, repeated prayers, cowls with scalloped edges, habits with the folds carefully counted, and all the symbols of separate divisions in the church. And that old man, although no monk but a mere mass-priest, a swarthy, unattractive character, let himself go completely in an attack on you. His outspokenness found favour with our common host, maybe because he resented the suggestion that there was anything distinguished in Germany, and also because he was no great friend of yours personally, and declared loudly that you had hay on your horns.[40] The fact is that the gospel and the whole canon of Scripture, the divine scourge of vices, was long ago wiped out by men of corrupted minds; and in its place they put an unpleasant kind of theology and traditions which express the wishes of those who invented them, so that with these laws to rely on in future they can let themselves go in all directions as they please. If anyone brings their behaviour back to the divine law and weighs it by that standard, they dare not arouse public feeling against the Scriptures, and in exchange for their resentment they take

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[36] Diego López Zúñiga (Stunica) (d 1530), theologian of the University of Alcalá and one of the contributors to the Complutensian Polyglot. In 1520 he published at Alcalá an intemperate attack upon Erasmus' *Novum instrumentum* of 1516: *Annotationes contra Erasmum Roterodamum in defensionem tralationis Novi Testamenti* (A.R. Brocario). For Erasmus' reply, see Ep 1277 n1. Zúñiga arrived in Rome on 9 February 1521 and continued there his attacks on Erasmus' work (see n45 below). Erasmus' own account of their bitter controversy is found in Ep 1341A:868–927. See also Epp 1277, 1289, 1290. For an extremely useful survey of Zúñiga's life and work, see H.J. de Jonge's introduction to ASD IX-2, especially 13–34.

[37] Possibly Cardinal Carvajal; see Ep 1330:48–51.

[38] Allen's note (v 22:148) gives a list of passages in the correspondence where this image occurs.

[39] Evidently excerpts from the manuscript of the *Erasmi ... blasphemiae et impietates* (n45 below).

[40] Ie, a chip on your shoulder; *Adagia* I i 81

vengeance on the man who detected their wickedness and wrote an appropriate note on the passage. Thanks to this attitude things had gone well with him, and he would have avenged himself on your critical nose by mudslinging of the foulest kind. So I developed a great distaste for this company, and found myself in an unfair position. We made it up, however, for I had been very kindly received; and so we parted.

Your rival went off to perform his duties, for he held a salaried post in the Sapienza Romana, and was lecturing on Oppian,[41] whom he regarded as the most important of all authors. He wanted to show Rome how rich he was and to pose as an expert in the fish-market – and this was a man who has spent a number of years on the reading of Holy Scripture, the Old and New Testaments, in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, and has a better right than most other people to express a judgment on such topics. But I went home with my head full of threats and already pondering in my mind a suitable place for challenging this man's insufferable malevolence in the style it deserved. This I proposed to do in a prologue to the continuous narrative from the four Gospels[42] which Augustine only sketched out in his *De consensu evangelistarum* and never completed.

While I was still full of this plan, we met again in November, and our friend Paolo Bombace[43] was in the company. On this occasion that enemy of yours again brought his old piece[44] onto the stage, but it was no longer a preface, it was a full-sized book,[45] designed to contain all his virulence and false accusations of heresy, so that you might be thought to be the only

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[41] Greek texts had been published by the Giunti at Florence in 1515 and by the Aldine Press in 1517.

[42] Cf lines 303–4, and see Ep 1330 n2.

[43] Erasmus and Bombace (Ep 210) had been friends since Erasmus' stay in Bologna in 1506–7. Bombace was now secretary to Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci (Ep 1000).

[44] See lines 161–71.

[45] During the course of 1521 Zúñiga had completed his *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates* in manuscript and had presented a copy to Pope Leo x (ASD IX-2 22–3), who had refused him permission to publish it (Ep 1341A: 914–15). After the death of Leo x, Zúñiga prepared a much abridged version, eliminating his own *confutatoria annotamenta* (the bulk of the original work) and leaving little more than a series of excerpts from Erasmus' works with references to those passages which Zúñiga considered suspect. This abridged version was published by A. Bladus at Rome in the spring of 1522 under the title *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates per Jacobum Stunicam nunc primum propalatae ac proprio volumine alias redargutae*. In June Erasmus replied with the *Apologia adversus libellum Stunicae cui titulum fecit, Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi*, published with the *Epistola de esu carnium* (Basel: Froben 6 August 1522). Text in LB IX 355–75. Cf Ep 1341A:868–88.

begetter of all the perfidy that could ever be invented under heaven or in hell by desperate minds that have abandoned every scrap of religion. This he read to the assembled company, and this he had given shortly before to Leo the Tenth; and he had brought men to the point of beginning to have dark suspicions of you. Paolo Bombace stood up for you in both places, in that company by his presence with his patron, and before Leo with a prepared defence; he stood up to their virulence and defended you and your religious attitude with great spirit. All the same, things were going downhill, and the wrong side might have won, had not Leo died and left their virulence unsupported.

You know by now what they wanted out of you. This was a test case. You saw it coming too; and I could see in your letter[46] that you were anxious, and thought that certain people could not even read you until you were cleared by a pardon from the pope. I saw the three-year space for which you asked[47] as a kind of truce in the war. I smiled quietly to myself, and more or less felt like saying 'There's many a slip 'twixt cup and lip.'[48]

Up to now, as long as I thought your enemy was something of a scholar and a man of high standing as a convinced Christian, all this caused me the greatest concern, and in my impatience I set off at high speed – oars and sails, as they say[49] – to write a defence[50] of your position. But when we met several times as the days went on, and every day he showed more in his true colours, I began to take the man's madness rather less seriously, thinking that a bad play will soon be shown up by bad acting. And now he is losing his reputation. A fellow-countryman of his,[51] who had spoken with you in Louvain and knew very well how you order your life, wrote him a letter about you in the most glowing terms,[52] with the object of making your enemy realize how good you are and desist from his criminal behaviour. There are people here who knew him at home, and say that over there he was considered an atheist; at any rate, I have often thought him an

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[46] Ep 1236:127–31

[47] See Ep 1236:135–7.

[48] *Adagia* I v 1

[49] *Adagia* I iv 18

[50] See lines 296ff. The defence, completed by December (Ep 1330 n2), appeared in April 1523, not as the introduction to a narrative of the Gospels (cf lines 200–1) but as a separate work: *Libellus Jacobi Landavi adversus Jacobi Stunicae maledicentiam, pro Germania*, published by Froben in combination with the first edition of the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A); summary and analysis in Schottenloher *Ziegler* 64–76.

[51] Juan de Vergara (Ep 1277)

[52] Written from Brussels on 10 October 1521; CWE 8 337–40. See especially lines 87ff, page 339.

Ebionite.[53] Paolo Bombace with a serious face accused him of being a foul toady, with a criminal system of making money by informing on the innocent. He said he was more horrible than all the heresy they tried to father on Erasmus. The man dodged this attack with a laugh like Domitian's, but he was not the least ashamed of himself.[54] When I and several other people protested at the unlimited bitterness with which he attacked you, he gave us each a different reason. This was not meant for Erasmus, he was attacking the spirit of the age; he only meant to keep Erasmus from going too far; and, what was more outrageous, he hoped to get some reputation out of Erasmus. This mountebank also goes the round of the bookshops, using them to press his slanderous views on everyone whether they will or no; he invites all he can to share his insanity, and has now found a fellow-countryman of the same kidney.[55]

Copies[56] are now on sale, designed to mobilize an attack on you with all the goblins of Scotism – the things you have always abhorred and kept as far away from as you could – and rout you with hicceities and isthicceities.[57] The author of this sorry business is also preparing in person to refute your later critical text of the New Testament[58] and your annotations on it, hoping to achieve an eruption at a point (if you please!) where he can drag Erasmus down into the crater like a second Empedocles[59] on Etna – and a very frigid one. I could not hope to depict the full frenzy of his feelings for you as they deserve. Hatred and spite for you and self-love for himself – these are the mainsprings of his whole mind. But I can give you his character as depicted by another man's pen. You have your enemy to the life – except perhaps that one ought to subtract his pursuit of Thais[60] and her like – apart from that you have at all points the braggart soldier[61] in the play.

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[53] The Ebionites were an early sect who denied the divinity of Christ; see Ep 1333 n22.

[54] The image of the emperor Domitian laughing to cover his shame is Ziegler's invention, albeit one apparently based on specific passages in well-known classical texts. No text mentions Domitian's laugh – he was known, rather, for his frowning severity – but Ziegler probably got the idea from two authors: Tacitus, who in *Agricola* 39 speaks of the happy countenance with which Domitian concealed his displeasure at the news of Agricola's superior accomplishments as a general; and Suetonius, who in *Domitianus* 11 states that Domitian always began pleasantly when he had something cruel to announce. Ziegler seems to have conflated these references with that in *Agricola* 45 to Domitian's crimson face which, because it was always flushed, concealed any shame he might have felt as a result of his cruelties.

[55] Sancho Carranza (Ep 1277 n8)

[56] Copies, apparently, of the *Annotationes contra Erasmum* (n36 above), which Zúñiga had brought with him from Spain (Ep 1341A:913–14). The *Erasmi blasphemiae* was not yet in print.

[57] The 'newly coined expressions and strange-sounding words' of the theologians, which Erasmus parodied in the *Moria*; ASD IV-3 146, 148 / CWE 27 126–7.

[58] Ie, the edition of 1519

[59] Horace *Ars poetica* 465

I thought you ought to know this, being aware that a speaker cannot put his case precisely as he should until he has fully got to know the temperament, the strategy, and the habits of his adversary. Had this not been my purpose in writing to you, I might perhaps have had some difficulty in defending the levity with which I have thought fit to break the stubborn silence of so many years and write at last, though I should like to depict the passions of mankind.

And so, now that your enemy's behaviour is such as to leave no genuine Christian spirit or conscience in him anywhere and nothing in the way of honourable dealings with his fellow men that is not open to criticism, my own opinion, dear Erasmus, is that in future it will be best for you on no account to bring yourself down to the level of the common herd. When you answer, I mean, keep as far as you can from the line he has marked out for himself to follow, and recall language to its proper level. This is the point at which you should display to all who call themselves Germans, with all the wonderful range and authority of your heroic soul, the criminal activity of foreigners and the way in which they slander the simple integrity and piety and dignity of Germans and put their patience to the test. The outcome of their actions you see for yourself, nor will any other remedy be effective in the long run. What? Are you to wage a long and fruitless struggle, with your weak arms and your feeble body, against a whole river that floods in upon us far and wide from every quarter? Stay at home; erect some dyke on your boundary, however short-lived, against which the weight of waters may subside and its force be broken. Do not misunderstand me, dear Erasmus. I lay down no guidance for that prolific Minerva who inspires you. But let me be allowed to say this much, that, when you understand from the sort of words I use how much I am devoted to you, you may love me in return, and be always assured of the evidence of my sincerity. Many men enjoy your society almost without a second thought, to whom I almost grudge the opportunities that they enjoy; for even among those who take your advice in the serious affairs of life, you would scarcely find one in a thousand who has more need than I have, in this business and in many more, of conversing with you face to face.

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[60] The courtesan in Terence's *Eunuchus*

[61] Thraso in Terence's *Eunuchus*

I am at work on a defence[62] to prove you blameless. It has made good progress from the start; but when it will ultimately finish its appointed course and when it will reach you I do not know. In the process I am led into many fields by that enemy of yours. If I follow these up as the subjects deserve or do not deserve, I should be at some risk when they reach the public; if I were to pass them over and leave them behind, I shall have deserted my post.

Then I plan a narrative of events designed to form a continuous narrative out of the four Gospels.[63] To this I am driven by the same necessity, and it is for these reasons that I regret my separation for so long from you all – from you, I mean, and my friend Froben, and the free part of Germany. But in the name of our friendship as fellow Christians, please let it also be a condition of your receiving this letter that you understand it is intended for your reading and then straight for the fire. On your side, if you mean to send me anything, please have it consigned to Paolo Bombace, my great friend, at least if you think my lodging too much out of the way. It is the Hungarian hospice in the College of San Pietro in Vaticano.

Farewell, dear Erasmus, 16 February 1522

Jakob Ziegler of Landau in Bavaria

To the much respected Master Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, his most honoured teacher and friend, in Basel, at Master Froben's

1261 / From Andrea Alciati — Avignon, 24 February 1522

On Alciati, who was at this time teaching law at Avignon, see Ep 1250.

The passage printed here is all that survives of Alciati's letter to Erasmus in response to Ep 1250. The passage survived because it was quoted by Bonifacius Amerbach in a letter to Alciati (April 1531) about the declamation against monastic life that had been causing Alciati such anxiety ever since 1520 (see Ep 1233A:14–22 and n5). After quoting the letter of 30 March 1531 (Allen Ep 2467) in which Erasmus declares that he had long since complied with Alciati's wishes, Bonifacius continues: 'Your letter from Avignon dated 24 February 1522 runs as follows,' and quotes the passage given below. Erasmus' response to Alciati's letter was Ep 1278.

Allen, using the manuscript in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS C.VIA.54.17v), was the first to print the Alciati excerpt in Bonifacius' letter. The entire letter was subsequently printed as AK Ep 1523.

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[62] See n50 above.

[63] See lines 200–1.

The great pains you have taken to see that my declamation is read by no one fills me with joy, and I am most grateful. You have made me happy by removing this anxiety. But to crown one good deed with another, let me beg you in God's name to put it on the fire. It had been stolen from my desk by Calvo[1] soon after it saw the light ...

1262 / To Johannes Erasmius Froben — Basel, 28 February 1522

This is the preface to the new, revised, and enlarged edition of the *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae* (Basel: Froben, March 1522). On the earlier and subsequent editions of the work, see Ep 1341A:285–301. On the 'heresies' discovered in this edition, see Ep 1299:59ff.

Johann Erasmius Froben (d 1549), the younger son of the Basel printer Johann Froben and godson of Erasmus, was about six years old at this time (Ep 635:26n).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANNES ERASMIUS FROBEN, GREETING

I should count you an uncommonly lucky young man, my beloved Erasmius, to be born in such a flourishing home of the best authors as your father's printing-house and brought up among so many men distinguished for their knowledge of the three ancient tongues; but at your age congratulations are not so much to the point as best wishes. And certainly you bear no ordinary load, if you are to satisfy your most affectionate father, to whom you truly are beloved, which your name means in the Greek, and who rests all his hopes on you, as well as Beatus Rhenanus[1] and myself, who took the promise at your christening, and Wolfgang Capito,[2] who stood sponsor at your confirmation. We have seen to it that your first childish prattle should be shaped by Greek and Latin. This book will help you not a little to acquire the rudiments of religion also, and on this score the uncounted host of children of your age will owe you a debt, as being the channel through which they get this great advantage. For I have taken it into my head to become a child again for some days for your benefit, as I schooled my pen

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1261

[1] Francesco Giulio Calvo of Menaggio, near Como, was a bookseller who had many friends among contemporary men of letters.

1262

[1] Ep 327

[2] Ep 459

and my matter to suit your tender years. May Jesus keep you always as you go from strength to strength. Farewell.

Basel, 28 February 1522

1263 / To [Thomas Wolsey] Basel, 7 March 1522

The manuscript of this letter (British Library Cotton Vitellius B.V.44), first published by Allen, was damaged by fire in 1731. It is not clear how much of the letter, which is all on one sheet, is missing: perhaps only a line or two at the top of the sheet, perhaps one or more sheets preceding. Since the letter was found among Wolsey's papers, he is presumed to have been the addressee.

... Marino Caracciolo,[1] who was prejudiced against me by Aleandro;[2] and Aleandro, being a man easily roused, was excited by the most mendacious detractors,[3] to whom he listened all too readily. In the eyes of God my innocence might be evidence enough, but among men a good Christian must protect his own reputation as best he can. Even before Luther had published his *Assertio*[4] and his *De captivitate babylonica*,[5] there was much in him I did not like, and I urged both him and his friends to moderate his style of writing.[6] I tried to prevent the publication of those first books,[7] though in fact they won almost universal approval. With Luther himself or with any member of his party I never had any understanding, any more than your Eminence had. If to instigate a person means to tell him not to, then I did instigate Luther; if to support a man means telling him to change his tune, then I was his supporter; if it is defending a man to say that on many points he is wrong, then I defended him. I always used the same language both to

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1263

[1] Marino Carracciolo of Naples (1469–1538), since 1518 papal nuncio to emperors Maximilian I and Charles V

[2] Ep 1256 n11

[3] Cf Epp 1268:70–2, 1302:58–9. It is not clear whom Erasmus means here. Allen (Ep 1481:61n) thought it was Baechem (Ep 1254 n6). Others have suggested Hoogstraten (Ep 1299 n25). But C. Augustijn argues, on the basis of evidence in the *Spongia*, that these two must be excluded and suggests that Erasmus may have been referring to Aleandro's brother Giambattista, secretary to the bishop of Liège. See ASD IX-1 151, footnote to lines 693–5 of the *Spongia*.

[4] *Assertio omnium articulorum M. Lutheri per bullam Leonis X novissimam damnatorum* (1520); WA 7 94–151.

[5] *De captivitate Babylonica ecclesiae praeludium* (1520); WA 6 497–573.

[6] Ep 980:45–58

[7] See Epp 904:20n, 967:107–9, 1033:52–5, 1143:23–5, 1167:305–7, 1195:143–4, 1217:107.

men of Luther's party and to his enemies. Evidence for this will be found in the letters I wrote to Luther himself[8] and to his friends, if they are willing to produce them. Had I had any dealings whatever with Luther's people, they would produce them, now that they are angry with me. Many letters from me to my friends are in circulation over here, but one especially which I wrote from Bruges to the bishop of Rochester, the publication of which I regret.[9] I wrote to him in a hurry and somewhat unguardedly, knowing him for a wise man and a good friend, and most discreet. This makes it clear that I do not favour Luther's business. Nor did I say anything different to Duke Frederick at Cologne[10] or to the king of Denmark.[11] When the captain-general of Bohemia[12] made me the most lavish offers, I sent him such an answer[13] as makes him now angry with me. In a word, so much am I Luther's man that in their public utterances his party rend me with abuse and threaten me with libellous pamphlets.

But, your Eminence will say, whence then this rumour? There are two

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[8] Of the letters which Erasmus and Luther wrote to one another in the period between Ep 980 (30 May 1519) and Ep 1443 (15 April 1524) only Ep 1127A survives.

[9] Cf Ep 1265:20–1, where Willibald Pirckheimer also refers to the circulation of a letter of Erasmus to the bishop of Rochester, John Fisher. No such letter has survived, which seems odd in the case of a document that was 'published' either in manuscript copies or in print. This consideration led Allen to speculate that both Erasmus and Pirckheimer may in fact have been referring to Ep 1228 (to William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury), which had just been published in the *Epistolae ad diversos* (August 1521). According to Allen, such a confusion could have arisen if 1/ the version that circulated had been based on the original manuscript with its uncertain address (see Allen's introduction to Ep 1228); 2/ Pirckheimer's identification of the author was a mistaken guess; 3/ Erasmus saw Pirckheimer's letter, which has no certain date, before 7 March and repeated his friend's error. All these things are possible.

[10] Elector Frederick 'the Wise' of Saxony, Luther's prince. On 5 November 1520, when Erasmus and Frederick were both in Cologne in the entourage of Charles v, the elector sought the great scholar's advice on the Luther affair. Erasmus criticized Luther's immoderate language (see the *Spongia* ASD IX-1 182:420–4) but, without endorsing any of Luther's opinions, upheld his right to a fair hearing; see the *Axiomata pro causa Lutheri*, which Erasmus wrote out for the elector immediately following their meeting (Ferguson *Opuscula* 336–7). Cf Ep 1155 introduction.

[11] Christian II 1481–1559; see Ep 1228:35–9.

[12] Probably Arkleb of Boskovice (Ep 1154), who was 'supreme captain' (*supremus capitaneus*) of Moravia

[13] Ep 1183

theologians[14] at Louvain who hate me for the sake of the humanities, of which they are more terrified than of dog or snake.[15] There are a handful of monks who think my books are responsible for their being undervalued in certain quarters.[16] They do not care what they do to me, provided they destroy me; wild beasts they are, not men. This is the truth. At the start I thought it wrong to brawl in public like madmen, when the evil was not yet past cure. If this had succeeded, Luther would not have gone so far out of his mind, nor would things have reached this pass. Nor do I yet see any end to it, unless some fresh approach can be found. We must get to the root of this evil, so widely has this contagion spread, and it is not sprung from nothing. One thing I will say, and countless people will back me up: I am so far a follower of Luther that no theologian by his writings or his tirades has been more of a hindrance to Luther's cause than I have. Had I been willing to declare myself in two or three words a member of Luther's party, we should see a very different game being played both here and in Germany from what we see now. And this is the man on whom they make these murderous attacks – one who under such varied provocation has remained in the Catholic party, because he would sooner be stoned by both sides than join any faction.

But, say they, I have published nothing against Luther. I have published letters, though not books. To write books I had not the leisure, and if I had had, there were strong reasons why it was not wise to write. At least I frankly made it quite clear, even at some risk to myself, that I was not doing business with his party. There is no lack of people to write, and there are other fields in which I can be of more use to Christendom. Posterity will understand that in all this I have played an honourable part. And in the mean time those who assail me with lies may expect to pay the penalty to their eternal judge.

I wished your Eminence to know this; and if I can convince you, I know you will look kindly on your humble servant as you have done hitherto. If not, I have done my duty, and have not left my innocence entirely defenceless. He must have a cruel heart who cares not what men say of him.

Respectful best wishes to your lordship, to whom I profess my entire devotion.

Basel, 7 March 1522

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[14] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6) and Vincentius Theoderici OP (Ep 1196)

[15] Horace *Epistles* 1.17.30.

[16] Cf Ep 1183:128–41.

1264 / To Nikolaus von Wattenwyl — Basel, 7 March 1522

Nikolaus von Wattenwyl (1492?–1551), who belonged to a distinguished Bernese family, was canon and acting provost of St Vincent's at Bern. In March 1523 he became provost in his own right. In 1525 he resigned all his benefices and joined the reformers.

The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO NIKOLAUS VON WATTENWYL, PROVOST OF BERN, GREETING

Honoured sir, our brief conversation gave me such a taste of your courtesy that after your departure I was seized with a very great desire to see you again, so much so that I have had thoughts of a visit to Bern for longer and more intimate enjoyment of your delightful society. And I had the fortunate offer of a most agreeable guide and companion on my way, who would have been as good as a carriage,[1] in the shape of Henricus Glareanus, who has, I am glad to say, returned to us at last from France.[2] But it was not yet possible for me to leave this treadmill; and had it been possible, it was not safe to risk a journey as long as the stoves are still burning, for at the slightest whiff from them I relapse at once into ill health.[3]

The arrival of my friend Glareanus has brought me such an accession of spirits that I feel a new man. This I think, shows sense on the part of the Swiss, that they value him so highly, for more than anyone he deserves the gratitude of his younger fellow-countrymen, scattering seeds of good judgment and sound learning among his own people which will one day break forth into a bountiful harvest.

I will send you my paraphrase on Matthew,[4] provided it is finished before Glareanus' departure. Once the stoves have cooled down, it will be possible to visit your city, and until then we will converse by exchanging letters. Farewell.

Basel, 7 March 1522

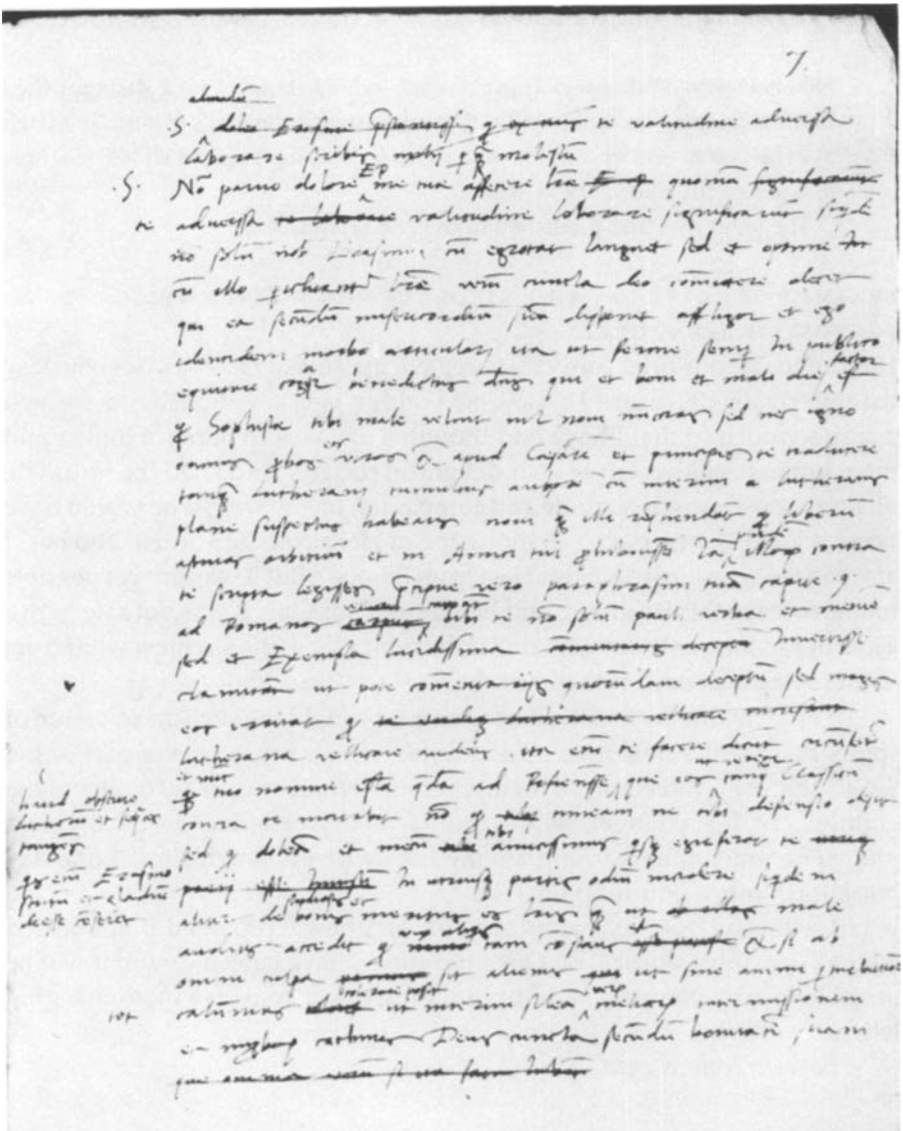
1264

[1] An allusion to one of the *Sententiae* (c 17) of Publilius Syrus: 'A witty travelling companion is as good as a carriage.' Erasmus had published the *Sententiae* under the title *Mimi Publiani*; see Ep 298 introduction.

[2] Glareanus (Ep 440) settled in Basel in 1514, moved to Paris in 1517, and returned to Basel shortly before this letter was written.

[3] See Ep 1256 n2.

[4] See Ep 1255.



Autograph rough draft of letter from Willibald Pirckheimer, Ep 1265
Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg

1265 / From Willibald Pirckheimer [Nürnberg, beginning of March 1522]

This is the autograph rough draft of Pirckheimer's reply to Ep 1259. It survives among Pirckheimer's papers in the Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg (MS PP.323) and was first published by Allen. The text breaks off in the middle of the page. For a possible clue to the date, see Ep 1263 n9. Erasmus' reply is Ep 1268.

Greeting. I was not a little sorry, Erasmus my most valued friend, to learn from your letter that you suffer from ill health; in our eyes it is not only Erasmus who suffers when you are ill, but humane letters are in peril with you. One must put everything in God's hands, and he will dispose of it according to his mercy. I too am sometimes smitten with rheumatism, so that in public I am almost always obliged to go on horseback. Blessed be the Lord, who is the maker of good days and of evil.

That the logic-choppers should wish you ill, as you say they do, is not news; but I am also not unaware of those excellent characters who misrepresent you even to the emperor and the princes as author of the troubles over Luther, though all the time you are deeply suspect in the eyes of Luther's party. I know how much they disapprove of your recognition of free will and, had your friends not prevented it, you would long ago have been reading their attacks upon you. In particular, they criticize your paraphrase on Romans chapter 9,[1] where they protest that you have turned upside-down not only Paul's words and intention but very clear examples too, being taken in no doubt by the commentaries of certain authors. But they are more irritated by the way in which you presume to pick holes in what Luther writes – or so they say.

There is in circulation at the moment a letter in your name to the bishop of Rochester,[2] which touches openly on Luther and his followers; and this, I fear, will rouse them against you like a trumpet. Not that I am afraid you may lack means of defence – who would ever suppose Erasmus to lack shield and sword? – but I am sorry to think, and all your dearest friends regret it with me, that you should incur the hatred of either side. Learning and good literature owe you quite another debt, not unpopularity on their account. Besides which, hardly anyone has such determination, however free of all blame he may be, that he can endure such malicious attacks without some distress of mind, to say nothing meanwhile of the interrup-

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1265

[1] Cf Ep 1342:1022–78.

[2] See Ep 1263 n9.

tion of things more worth doing, and the jeers of the ungodly. God dispose it all according to his goodness! But if fate so dictates ...

1266 / From Udalricus Zasius Freiburg, 20 March 1522

This letter was first published in Zasius *Opera omnia* ed J.U. Zasius and Joachim Mysinger (Lyon: S. Gryphius 1550; repr Aalen 1966) v 488.

On Zasius, see Epp 303 and 1252.

ZASIUS TO THE GREAT ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I deeply regret it, great Erasmus, if your opponents are preparing a case against you, nor do I see what they can object that can count against you, for if you have aroused some mistaken suspicions, why should you not clear them up? But I hope things will go better. Your distinguished position, your learning, your character, your high and settled principles – all these men must take into account before they turn upon you. But if they do show their claws to any purpose, remember that other men of principle have had to face similar treatment, and they gain rather than lose in standing from these venomous attacks. And so, great scholar and great man that you are, pray despise such attacks as may come your way. Think nothing of the brainless utterances of men born to make trouble, which can do no possible harm to your reputation nor damage a name already secure in the judgment of all mankind.

For my part, I think that to pass judgment on Luther's teaching is beyond me, who know nothing of the subject; but I can say that I approve some things about it and dislike others. In general, I have always felt that all teaching which does not come from God soon collapses, but that it endures if it is directed by the Holy Spirit.[1] As for you, you have your own special task: press on with the exposition of the Scriptures. You have Dorp,[2] who has outstanding ability, as a colleague in your work; others too, though few in number, with whom you can work for the benefit of Christendom. Your teaching is the more authentic, inasmuch as it stays close to the actual text, and it is all the safer, because it is the real thing.

Apart from that, we have good reason to be anxious for your help here,

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1266

[1] Acts 5:38–9

[2] Maarten van Dorp, the Louvain theologian who in 1515 had criticized Erasmus' *Moriae encomium* and his work on the New Testament (Epp 304, 337, 347). Friendly relations were restored in 1516–17 (Epp 438, 474, 627) and lasted until Dorp's death in 1525.

as there is a dangerous dispute between the university and the city,[3] which has grown so intense that even Velius[4] last night was in some danger, and other scholars too. Personally, I have decided, unless things improve, to leave and on Capito's advice to move to Mainz,[5] where a regular chair is now vacant; for I am not prepared to face these perils any longer. By counsel and advice and in the end by making my voice heard I have urged both parties to agree, without making one jot of progress. What hope remains in which I can find comfort? So I would rather leave in good time than postpone my escape until I have suffered loss, that it may not be said that I was incapable of looking after myself. Farewell, ornament of our generation.

From Freiburg, 20 March 1522

1267 / To Stanislaus Thurzo — Basel, 21 March [1522]

This letter to Thurzo (Epp 1242 and 1260 n34) was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, which gives the date 1523. Allen changed this to 1522 on the basis of internal evidence: Ursinus' departure, Erasmus' attack of the stone, and the reference to the two books which had, apparently, appeared quite recently. Moreover, if 1523 were correct, Erasmus would hardly have failed to mention the paraphrase on St John (Ep 1333).

TO STANISLAUS THURZO, BISHOP OF OLOMOUC,
FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

My honoured lord, the more pleasure I received from Ursinus' society[1] – he is at once such a good scholar and such a civilized man that this was very great – the more I feel his departure.[2] I have nothing of importance to write, but I did not wish him to depart without a letter from me, to assure you that I am entirely at your service for such duties as a humble but devoted dependant owes to the best and most generous of patrons.

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[3] There had been repeated controversies between town and gown since 1516, with accompanying tumults since at least 1521. As legal counsel to the university, Zasius was deeply involved. See Roderich Stinzing *Ulrich Zasius* (Basel 1857; repr Darmstadt 1961) 243–4.

[4] See Ep 1252 n1.

[5] Capito (Ep 459) was at this time the chief adviser to the archbishop of Mainz. The contemplated move never took place.

1267

[1] Caspar Ursinus Velius (Ep 1280A)

[2] Ursinus had last been at Basel in January (Ep 1252 n1). On 23 March he was still in Freiburg (AK Ep 857); but shortly thereafter he departed for Vienna, which he reached by May (Ep 1280A introduction).

During the winter months some kind of pestilent rheum[3] troubled me greatly for many days, and then returned after an interval and was worse and more prolonged than ever. Shortly before Lent,[4] when I was more or less recovered, I was suddenly laid low by a stone in the kidneys.[5] The fact is, the crazy habitation of my body, breaking down now in one place and now in another, gives its tenant notice that he must shortly flit, and this I almost think desirable, when I see the tragic mess we are making of this world of ours. All which we owe to certain disputatious persons, of whom one party have some plans – I know not what – to re-establish the liberty of the gospel, while the others consolidate their rule by strengthening their defences even more.

For my own part, I seem to see a way to put the interests of the Christian religion first without commotion.[6] But to play that piece we should need princes devoted wholeheartedly to the public weal, and to the glory of the supreme prince, Jesus Christ, before whose judgment-seat every monarch however powerful must take his stand. I myself have never come to any agreement with any member of Luther's party; I have always tried to recall them to more moderate policies, in fear, of course, that things might end in civil strife. And yet there are people with the effrontery to traduce me even in the emperor's court as a supporter of Luther. Here, Luther's people grind their teeth at me because they say I disagree with him; they tear me in pieces in their public pronouncements and threaten me with venomous pamphlets on top of that. So to both sides I am a heretic.

The New Testament has come out, revised by me for the third time and added to.[7] So has a new paraphrase on St Matthew's Gospel,[8] with the others on all the Epistles of St Paul.[9] Many men, and princes especially, urge me to write against Luther. Personally, if given the choice, I would rather fight against the world for the glory of Christ. Luther will feel no lack of antagonists. My best wishes to your lordship.

Basel, 21 March 152[3]

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[3] See Ep 1256 n2.

[4] 5 March–19 April 1522

[5] See Epp 1281:17, 1283:10–11, 1285:21, 1294:12, 1302:42, 1311:5–6, 1342:260, 1349:3–4, 1352:18, 1353:23.

[6] Probably a reference to the plan outlined in the *Consilium* of November 1520, of which Erasmus and the Dominican Johannes Faber were the co-authors; see Ep 1149 introduction. Erasmus and Faber proposed that the examination of Luther's works be entrusted to a learned commission appointed by Charles v, Henry viii, and Louis of Hungary.

[7] Basel: Froben, February 1522

[8] See Ep 1255.

[9] In the Froben folio of February 1522

1268 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Basel, 30 March 1522

First published in the *Pirckheimeri opera*, this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 1265. The extant manuscript in the Stadtbibliothek Nürnberg (PP.412) is a contemporary copy.

Greeting. Afflicted as we both are, I only wish it were as easy to restore each other's health as it is to exchange letters of sympathy! Not but what my bodily distempers are the least part of my troubles. As Christ is my witness, my conscience tells me that I desire none of the things of this world, and I shall willingly move from my present lodging as soon as our great commanding officer summons me. Nor should I be reluctant to die in harness, if need be, at my pious task, provided I may be permitted to earn some advantage for Jesus Christ. But I see clearly how weak, or rather how unfortunate, I am, I see how monstrous is this generation, and I do not know to which party to attach myself, except that my conscience does give me some confidence to appear before Jesus my judge. Those who in the pope's name pursue some policy I know not what are so busy tightening every noose of that ancient tyranny that they seem likely to add much to the load rather than take anything away. On the other side, those who under Luther's name proclaim themselves defenders of the liberty of the gospel are animated by a spirit I cannot assess. Certainly many have a finger in that pie whom I should prefer to see at arm's length, if it were my business. All the while, disastrous rifts rend Christian charity everywhere. All the while, men's consciences are left in the air. Those who are naturally prone to licence easily snatch an excuse out of Luther's books; more modest folk are left between the devil and the deep sea. On the one side they see arguments that carry conviction and natural common sense; on the other, the authority of princes and a multitude no man can number.

Where this business will end, I do not know; personally, I do not find a faith extorted under compulsion of much value. Great is the authority of a papal bull,[1] still greater that of an imperial decree;[2] but though such things will perhaps keep men's tongues silent for a time, whether they can convert men's minds I do not know. Would that God might be reconciled with us, and put it into the minds of princes to act together in sincerity, looking

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1268

[1] The bull of excommunication against Luther, *Decet pontificem romanum*, 3 January 1521

[2] The Edict of Worms, May 1521, outlawing Luther, his books, and his followers; cf Ep 1313 n7.

towards nothing save the glory of Christ, while they search out the sources of this evil and find some effective and lasting remedy! – and that too with the least possible upheaval of the world, which means with the least possible convulsion of the commonwealth. In a word, things have come to such a pass that something absolutely must be done to succour the liberty of all Christian people. So many abuses have crept little by little into the standards of society where, as though established by decree, they have usurped the force of inescapable law.

On councils I would not dare say anything, unless perhaps this last Lateran Council[3] was no council at all. There is also much usurpation of authority by the universities, which has grown imperceptibly until they almost expect their pronouncements to be taken as articles of faith. They are now carrying on this traffic under the shadow of the Holy See; for one thing they have made excessive claims in the past, for another they have reached a pitch of insolence which makes them universally intolerable. Things that have gradually gathered strength cannot suddenly be torn up by the roots, and open contempt for the authority of the powers that be is neither safe nor profitable in my opinion. As it is, the affair is carried on, on one side with bulls and edicts and menaces, on the other with scandalous, not to say seditious, pamphlets. If the princes are too busy with other things to attend to this, I am surprised that no men of good will are forthcoming who might devise some prudent policy to withstand such evils.

I myself am not very much concerned. The end of my life cannot be very far away. But even a dying man must wish for the peace of Christendom, if we are right in our conviction that Christ is the immortal head of the whole church. One man has an eye to his private advantage, another is afraid of losing what he already has, another dislikes disorders and stays quiet; and all the while the perilous conflagration spreads. As for me, the malevolence of certain people has laid on me such a burden of ill will that the attempt would be fruitless if I tried to do anything. Certain theologians I could name, feeling that my efforts to restore the study of the ancients might gradually lead to some loss of their authority, were ready, even before the world had heard the name of Luther, to set on foot anything they could against me. To them Luther handed a weapon with which to destroy me; although I have always kept clear of this Luther business, except for warning him constantly to change the tone of his writing if he wishes to do any good.

Then Aleandro[4] appeared. Even before there was any mention of

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[3] The fifth, 1512–17, which produced many fair words but no reforms

[4] Ep 1256 n11

Luther, he strove with my poor self as potter with potter[5] – a man high and mighty by nature, bold and irascible, who can never have enough either of profit or of reputation. This man was filled to the brim by certain persons[6] with the most outrageous falsehoods, and roused to such a pitch that he did not care what he said about me, even in the highest quarters, if only he could be my undoing. And yet, when in my company, he used to swear that there was no one living more well disposed to me than he was. When he departed, he left his tools behind him well and truly in position, two Louvain theologians,[7] Master Caracciolo,[8] the bishop of Liège (who changes his tune too often),[9] and a certain Spaniard at the emperor's court, whom I suspect of being Bishop de la Mota.[10] In Rome he has Zúñiga,[11] a man whom everyone knows is crazy[12] and born to make mischief. He had shown Pope Leo a book[13] listing sixty thousand heresies selected from my published works, and I was already in serious danger, had not death carried off Leo, who was in other ways no enemy of my humble self.

Luther's people are now threatening me with scandalous pamphlets, and the emperor was nearly convinced that I was the fountain-head of all the trouble over Luther. And so I am in a splendid position of danger from both sides, though all ought to be grateful to me. I had decided to write something,[14] not against Luther but about steps towards peace; but I see both parties are now so hot that it is better to keep quiet. Not but what I could wish that Luther's people had published an attack on me two years ago: they would have delivered me from a load of ill will. I consulted the most expert theologians whether there was anything in the ninth chapter of Romans,[15] and they said there was nothing wrong in it, unless those men think it wrong that I should attribute anything, however slight, to free will.

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[5] Ie, with professional envy; *Adagia* I ii 25

[6] See Ep 1263 n3.

[7] See Ep 1263 n14.

[8] Ep 1263 n1

[9] Erard de la Marck (1472–1538), bishop of Liège since 1505, had been a friend and correspondent of Erasmus since 1517 (Ep 738). About 1520 a letter, no longer extant, from Aleandro produced a temporary estrangement of the bishop from Erasmus over the reference to Erard in Ep 980:42–3, but friendly relations were soon restored; see Ep 1127A:83–94 and n23.

[10] See Ep 1273.

[11] Ep 1260 n36

[12] See Ep 1260:229, 248.

[13] Ep 1260:210–17

[14] See Ep 1275 n7.

[15] Ie, if there was any fault in his paraphrase on Romans 9, which had drawn the fire of the Lutherans; Ep 1265:14–17

Farewell, my distinguished friend, and keep your affection warm for me, as I know you always do.

Basel, 30 March 1522
Your sincere friend Erasmus, written in the morning in a hurry
I had no time to reread this letter, so please excuse faults.
To the honourable Willibald Pirckheimer, town councillor of Nürnberg

1269 / From Joris van Halewijn Brussels, 31 March 1521/2

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 6) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). The contents leave no doubt that the letter was written in 1522.

Joris, lord of Halewijn and Comines (1473–1536), was a humanist scholar and, at this time, a member of Charles v's court.

JORIS HEER VAN HALEWIJN TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Your letter[1] has come, dearest Erasmus, and with it your paraphrases on Paul's Epistles[2] and on Matthew,[3] and I and my friend Glapion[4] showed them to the emperor. His Majesty made it clear that the gift was appreciated, as you can see from the letter he is sending you.[5] At this point Glapion made an open move to support your case and to say something on your behalf; but he wished you were here, so that he could establish your position more securely. He wished also that you would write some pieces against Luther as the enemy of Christian piety; for he said that some things of that kind could snuff out all suspicion and all the malevolence of your detractors. How I wish you could pay us a flying visit before the emperor leaves,[6] so as to take thought more securely for your future! I pray that the Almighty may restore your health[7] and grant that all may be well with you. Farewell.

The bishop of Palencia, whose name is Mota,[8] a Spaniard, tells me to

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1269

[1] Not extant. Erasmus had written it at the suggestion of Vives; Ep 1256:68–70.
[2] Presumably the collected edition of February 1522
[3] Ep 1255
[4] Ep 1275
[5] Ep 1270
[6] On 2 May Charles left Brussels, bound for England and Spain; Gachard II 32.
[7] See Ep 1256 n2.
[8] Ep 1273

send you his warmest greetings. Farewell again, from Brussels, on the last day of March AD 1521.

To Erasmus of Rotterdam, the man of letters

1270 / From Charles v Brussels, 1 April 1522

A letter of acknowledgment for the paraphrase on Matthew, which Erasmus had dedicated to the emperor (Ep 1255). The letter was first published in the Froben octavo edition of the paraphrase in 1523. According to Allen, the contemporary manuscript copy of the letter in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels (Sér ii.53 f 16) was apparently made from the printed book rather than from the original. For Erasmus' references to this letter, see Epp 1299:39–40, 1300:63–4, 1323:20–1, 1331:12–13, 1342:280.

CHARLES, BY DIVINE MERCY ELECTED EVER-AUGUST EMPEROR OF THE ROMANS, KING OF SPAIN AND THE TWO SICILIES ETC, ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA, DUKE OF BURGUNDY ETC

Right trusty and well-beloved. We derived great pleasure from your paraphrase on the Gospel of St Matthew which has recently appeared, not so much from its dedication to ourself as from the great applause with which it has been received by all authoritative and learned critics, but above all for the great contribution which such an exposition of the pure gospel teaching will make with its distinguished scholarship to theological studies and to the Christian religion as a whole. Great as is the reputation you have won by the other products of your labours, which are famous everywhere, by none are you thought to have earned a richer harvest than by your paraphrases. We remember for our own part how your many distinguished intellectual gifts have been exhibited, partly to his Majesty our father of illustrious memory and partly to us. To him you offered your *Panegyricus*,[1] and to us your *Institutio principis christiani*,[2] not only for the enhancement of our name but also to the great profit of posterity. We therefore reckon it part of our royal duty to show you all our gratitude as occasion may offer, for we are given to understand that it is no small part of the felicity of men of genius to find in the prince one who admires their great qualities. In the mean time we will do all we can to promote your religious undertakings and the honourable and valuable enterprise on which you are at present engaged, and will

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1270

[1] Ep 179

[2] Ep 393

encourage whatever we learn that you have done for the honour of Christ and the salvation of all Christian people.

Given at Brussels, 1 April 1522
Charles
G. Morillon[3]

1270A / From Battista Casali
Rome, spring (after 1 April) 1522

This letter appears on page 455.

1271 / From Juan Luis Vives
Bruges, 1 April 1522

For the source of this letter, see Ep 1256 introduction.

VIVES TO ERASMUS

Your letter[1] written from Basel on the fourth of February has arrived, and it arrived with the seal not exactly broken, but so damaged and defaced that it was easy to detect that it had been opened on the way. That Augustine's *De civitate Dei*[2] is being published separately[3] is very good news, and I am immensely grateful to you for arranging this. But I should like to see it also printed with the rest of Augustine's works, so that the corpus is not a body lacking this limb; and I think Froben will manage to print some separately and some as part of the whole. I could have wished that you had read some pages in the books I sent you, and had told me what you make of them and written your opinion at some length, so that I could have known what to avoid and what to follow, and what my policy should be; for in this work I have tried, so far as I could, to please the public by my brevity.[4] I encountered some passages in which I could not achieve this, for instance when there were subjects not very familiar to our divines, such as history and mythology and philosophy, especially Platonism. Consequently in books 8 and 10 I have perhaps been longer than I ought to have been, not only in order to open and display to them these recondite subjects, but also to leave them not wholly ignorant of Plato and aware that he is by no means inferior to Aristotle, which may arouse a wish to get to know other important authors.

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[3] Guy Morrillon (Ep 1287)

1271

[1] Not extant. Doubtless a reply to Ep 1256

[2] See Ep 1309.

[3] That is, without waiting for the rest of Erasmus' edition of Augustine, which was not published until 1529

[4] As Erasmus had advised; see Allen Ep 1531:40.

Yet I have not piled up everything that I might have. I have left out far more than I have cited. In other books I easily maintained the brevity I had decided on, for stories taken from Holy Writ are too familiar, even to ordinary people, to need lengthy explanations, and theological questions I have not pursued to any length, being content with a mention of them, or else there would have been no limits. Nor have I been so much a slave to reputation as you perhaps suppose, though I have also given it a thought. But neither the time available nor the nature of the work have left me free to think much about reputation; I should have been glad of more time for work that was to be entirely devoted to giving me publicity and a good name. And then somehow the writing of notes, unless they are notes on Scripture, is not of a nature to get a man a famous name. Work that is to earn an immense reputation will be wholly its author's property, and ought not to be written as a commentary on someone else. But I have brought it to as high a standard of finish as was possible, and do not doubt the reader will recognize that I have tried to do credit both to you, who encouraged me to undertake the work, and to Augustine, and to my own reputation. The jest I made at the expense of a commentator[5] I have not suppressed; and in any case, even had you not told me to, it was my intention to display in my preface what sort of men had written on Augustine; this I propose to do, and shall hold them up for the reader's exquisite amusement.[6] Then in the work itself I intersperse nosegays, as it were, plucked from their commentaries and Passavanti's additions,[7] so that their sweet fragrance may refresh the reader and beguile the tedium of his journey.

From the things I now send you, you will see how much I fear any trouble from them. The life of Augustine I should prefer you to add yourself, for I am not confident of putting it together with the good judgment that you

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[5] Jacopo Passavanti; see following note.

[6] In his edition of the *De civitate Dei* Vives included a prefatory essay entitled 'De veteribus interpretibus huius operis' (pages 16–24 in the Leiden edition of 1563). Vives observes that some Dominicans had pronounced his commentary superfluous because members of their own order had already written commentaries 'in such a marvellously learned, skilful, detailed, and successful manner that there was no room for improvement' (page 16). Vives then scornfully catalogues the errors and nonsense to be found in the commentaries of certain Dominicans: the fourteenth-century Englishmen Thomas de Walleys and Nicholas Trivet, and their younger Florentine contemporary Jacopo Passavanti (d 1357). Concerning Passavanti, who had studied in France, Vives asserts that his fellow friars had given him the name 'Passavant' (ie, *pas savant*) as a joke (page 22).

[7] Passavanti's notes on *De civitate Dei* were published as additions to the commentaries of Thomas de Walleys (see preceding note); Lyon: J. Sacon 15 October 1520.

show in everything you do; and I shall be thought to have done the saint a bad turn if what you might otherwise have written about him is written by me, so that my poor efforts make me responsible for depriving posterity of a brilliant treatment of his life by you. I do beg you and urge you to write it instead. I send you with this ten books, from 8 to 17, and expect to send the remaining five just before Easter[8] or soon after. They are mostly finished, and I am now revising them, and shall proceed at once to have them copied on better paper. The original I shall keep among my most private possessions, for I can see what an expensive injury I should do to Froben if I were to give anyone a copy. But I could wish also that he in his turn should give no one access to what he has printed until he has finished the whole work; and I say this not without good reason. I perceive that you have always regarded honourable dealing as the safeguard of your whole life; and this is the one resource relied on by that great orator, even when he has plunged into the storm and tempest of public life, by which, as he declares, he easily despises all controversy.[9] And indeed it is impossible that God should not be well disposed towards you, for you never forget that our life here is too short to deserve that we should stir up troubles and tragedies in order to preserve it.

As for Aleandro, I do not doubt that things are as you say, though he himself, when he returned to Brussels from Liège,[10] swore to me that he had always spoken up for your reputation in front of the great men. He has now run off to Spain to the new pope,[11] of whom everyone hopes and expects great things. Christ grant that his election may cure all these great evils in his church! If friends in your part of the world are afraid that some people may use their pens as weapons to attack you, this, to use a retort of Cicero's,[12] is to do service. What grander and more fertile subject could one find than to speak about Erasmus and to defend Erasmus? How easy, how truthful not only in fact but in appearance, is the task of defending the innocent! If your way of life wins the approval of your conscience, the most important witness in everything, can you not be confident that you will have the approval of others, even if your judge is a personal enemy, as in the story about Scipio?[13]

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[8] 20 April 1522

[9] The reference is perhaps to Cicero's *Pro Milone* 5.

[10] There seems to be no other evidence of Aleandro's visit to Liège. It must have taken place before 19 February 1522, when Aleandro departed for Spain as a member of the emperor's embassy to the new pope (see following note); J. Paquier *Jérôme Aléandre et la principauté de Liège* (Paris 1896) 109.

[11] Adrian VI (Ep 1304)

[12] *Philippics* 2.2

[13] Cicero *De oratore* 2.285

As for the black monk,[14] I am sorry it has taken you so long to come round to my opinion; there is much truth in the saying that one should avoid a friend who can do one harm and cannot help one. Zúñiga[15] is preparing a long and savage attack on you; so Vergara[16] told me, and read aloud a letter[17] Zúñiga had sent him from Rome, in which he threatens he will do this. The letter is written in Spanish, answering one from Vergara in Latin; for Vergara is surprised that he should reply to Latin in the vernacular. Such a letter neither Thraso nor Pyrgopolinices[18] would have written. I have never yet spoken of Zúñiga to any Spaniard without his saying how much he dislikes him – arrogant, boastful, slanderous, malicious beyond anything one could explain or believe. He has also written a most virulent book attacking Lefèvre;[19] it has annoyed many people, and lost him most of his friends. They say further that he cannot bear the thought of any people being friends; he is always striving and toiling away, not merely to estrange them from one another but to make them enemies. This I have been told by men who had been most united and had been made bitter enemies by Zúñiga. He sounds like one of the Furies, not a human being. It is greatly to one's credit to be spoken ill of by a man with such a character; no one can enjoy his approval without being suspected of resembling him.

That remarkable verse comes into my head as the best encouragement I can offer you: 'Yield not to evils; march more boldly on.'[20] Maybe I should speak quite differently if I were in your shoes; but in giving advice we say, not what we should do in the same circumstances, but what ought to be done. You have played out the greater portion of your part in the drama of this life; in what remains, devote yourself to earning the approval, not of the audience only, the men you can see, but of Christ, for whom you have endured so many labours, and of your conscience. If you give any weight to the applause of the audience, let it be posterity rather than the present. Posterity, when envy and all the other emotions are done away, will contemplate in you the pure and true Erasmus, and will give you the glory you deserve, all the more generously in so far as the men of your own generation have been unfair to you, and your virtues have been less clearly recognized by the men among whom they were active. We see how this happened to Socrates. I beg you urgently not to distress yourself; remember that, if you consider only yourself and your renown, you have lived long enough and belong now to the ages. You can infer from the judgment of not a few men of good will what will be said of you among peoples yet unborn. If you consider this, you will reckon all the days of your life henceforward as pure gain, and you will live in peace and happiness; this, and this alone, means to live without anxiety and care, and the white hair that protects your old age will make you think nothing of the many barking dogs. You yourself will be as it were above the power of fate, and from a kind of exalted station, which is the approval of all good men, you will see everything beneath your feet.

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[14] Perhaps the Dominican, Johannes Faber (Ep 1267 n6), Erasmus' admiration for whom may already have been cooling; cf his comments on Faber in the *Spongia* of August 1523 (ASD IX-1 156:840–9).

[15] See Ep 1260 nn36, 45.

[16] Ep 1277

[17] Dated 9 January 1522, and printed in CWE 8 340–3

[18] Thraso is the braggart soldier in Terence's *Eunuchus*, and Pyrgopolinices is the hero of Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*.

[19] *Annotationes contra Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem* (Alcalá: A.G. Brocario 1519)

[20] Virgil *Aeneid* 6.95

But I begin to forget to whom I am writing. I think you will get a letter from More[21] by the hands of Clement,[22] who has set off in these last few days for Italy and means to pass through Basel, or so he said. In his last letter to me, More says nothing about his illness. I think he must have recovered, for his earlier letter already indicated that he was improving. At the beginning of Lent[23] I came to Bruges, because Lent in Louvain never suits me; it is so far inland, and we eat no fish except what is already stinking and not cooked so that I can eat it. A few days before my arrival Petrus Laurinus[24] had died, which is no small loss to me. The dean[25] sends you his greetings; he set off last week for Brussels. He told me to send you greetings from the abbot of St Bavo's at Ghent,[26] who this last first of January had a golden new-year's present ready for you against your arrival. I know not what; money, I suppose. About Ferdinand there is still no progress,[27] and I pursue the matter so slowly and languidly that I dare say there never will be any.

The duke of Alba[28] was making me an offer by no means to be despised, had the friars allowed me to hear of it: he was most keen that the grandsons he has in Spain, his eldest son's boys,[29] should be taught by me.

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[21] The letter to Erasmus is lost, as are the two to Vives (lines 116, 118).

[22] See Ep 1256 n40.

[23] 5 March–19 April 1522

[24] Petrus Laurinus (Pieter Lauwerijns), 1489–1522, was the brother of Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342), dean of St Donatian's at Bruges.

[25] Ie, Marcus Laurinus; see the preceding note.

[26] Lievin Hugenoys (Ep 1214)

[27] See Ep 1256 n24.

[28] Ep 1256 n12

[29] The duke had two grandsons by his son Garcia, who had been killed in 1512 fighting the Moors. The elder, Fernando Alvarez, 1508–82, later became

When he was making arrangements to send one of his gentlemen of the bedchamber to me to discuss the proposal and offer me two hundred gold ducats a year by way of recompense, a certain Dominican friar breaks in and asks the duke whether he has anything to go to Louvain, because he will be setting off there next day. 'Nothing,' says the duke, 'could be more opportune. Pray speak with Vives, and find out whether he is willing to be tutor to my grandsons for this salary.' And at the same time a nobleman called Bertrand,[30] the man who visited you at Anderlecht,[31] gave him a letter to me containing more details of the whole business. The friar came to Louvain; he spoke with me ten times and more: not a word about the duke, nor did he give me Bertrand's letter. The duke, when he saw me hesitate, or perhaps the friar told him I had said no, handed the boys over from now onwards to a certain Severus,[32] who is a monk. Knowing nothing of all this, I came to Brussels, and there Bertrand protested that I had never answered his letter. 'Letter be hanged!' says I, 'what letter?' 'Do you really mean,' he said, 'What letter?' 'Really,' I said. Then in the presence of many other people he told me the whole story. Many who were there assured me that they had been present when the duke gave his commission to the friar. They were very sorry, they said, that I had turned the offer down, for I should never find a place more to my liking than with them, which meant with men who liked me very much; but it was not possible now to reopen the question, because the duke had come to an agreement with Severus. 'What an idea!' I said; 'Could I possibly reject any offer made to me by the duke, since I have always sought most eagerly for any chance of showing how very desirous I was of serving the duke?' I was grateful, I told them, for their friendly feelings, and resented not so much the failure of the offer to reach me as the criminal behaviour of the friar. And this we suffer from men who call themselves brethren; how will they treat strangers? Not content with attacking scholarship, they are already encroaching on our worldly positions too. God himself will be our defender. Farewell, my dear teacher.

Bruges, 1 April 1522

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notorious as the Duke of Alba who imposed a reign of terror on the Netherlands (1567–73). The younger, Bernardino, died in 1535.

30 Unknown

31 Erasmus was in Anderlecht from 31 May to 5 July, and from 31 August to 14 October; see Epp 1208, 1221, 1232, 1239.

32 Identity unknown. Erasmus mentions someone with the same name in letters to Italian correspondents (Epp 1169:31, 1195:171, and 1198:52), but this Severus, doubtless a Spaniard, is not likely to have been the same person. For another unlikely candidate, see CEBR sv 'Severus.'

1272 / From Stanislaus Thurzo [Kroměříž?], 10 April 1522

This is Bishop Thurzo's reply to Epp 1242–3. The letter was first published in Erasmus' commentary on Psalm 14, *De puritate tabernaculi* (Basel: Froben and Episcopius 1536). The probable place of writing is inferred from BRE Ep 223.

STANISLAUS THURZO, BISHOP OF OLOMOUC, TO DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETINGS

I cannot fail to admit, dear Erasmus, most learned of men, that I am filled with incredible happiness and joy whenever I remember (as I constantly do) the benefit that I owe to your exceptional generosity, in which you show yourself so kind as to admit me to the same place in your affection in which in a saintly and loving spirit you once held my brother the bishop of Wrocław,[1] now torn from me by an early death; for this there is abundant evidence in the most open-hearted letters which you wrote me recently. These letters I treasure as highly as the most valuable gift I ever received. Could anything more precious come my way than for Erasmus, the great man of our time, Erasmus the unchallenged leader without exception in every branch of learning in both tongues, to admit me readily and gladly to be his friend? – and this when he has not yet met me, and I have done him no service worth the doing, but moved solely by the persuasion, such as it is, of Caspar Ursinus[2] or, to speak more truly, by his own inborn kindness, which he shows in equal measure to almost everyone devoted to the humanities. Why then should I not rejoice, why not think myself remarkably fortunate, that such a blessing as I could never deserve has come my way unasked?

It is at any rate a long time since I first felt awe, respect, and admiration for Erasmus, as a kind of divine being sent down to us from heaven. In all my travels I have you always as a companion at my elbow, for your most scholarly and pious writings make me not only a better scholar but a better man. But now that mutual affection has been added to all these, as I hope for salvation by the pleasure of our great Saviour, I know no words in which to express how much I rejoice and how much I love to see you famous. But this I must not fail to ask (for Love's an anxious being,[3] as you are aware), do not forget me and let me slip from your heart; and if you love me, I in return will enfold you in immortal affection and will perform most readily for your sake

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1272

[1] Johannes Thurzo, 1464/5–1520 (Ep 850)

[2] Caspar Ursinus Velius (Ep 1280A)

[3] Cf Ovid *Heroides* 1.12.

whatever gratitude and constant affection could do and ought to do. Caspar Ursinus was warmly commended to me long ago by his gifts, his literary attainments, and his many services as well; but now that you too give him such a warm recommendation, I will gladly add something further to what I have done for him before, so that he may see how far from fruitless is the support of a great man and a very wise one.

I send you for the time being a small token of my respect for the great man that you are, to which with your usual courtesy I know you will give a kind reception, four gold coins of virtuous emperors. For I have heard that you take great delight in such relics of the past. If there is any other way in which I can gratify you as a dear friend, ask me, or somehow let me know, and it is as good as done. Farewell, and best wishes.

10 April 1522

1273 / To Pedro Ruiz de la Mota Basel, 21 April 1522

This letter, first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, is probably a response to the compliment relayed in Ep 1269:15–16. The bishop's reply was likely the letter mentioned in Epp 1299:43, 1300:65, 1331:16–17, 1342:283.

Pedro Ruiz de la Mota of Burgos (d 19 September 1522), had already been in Hapsburg service for several years when in 1511 he was appointed chaplain and almoner to the future Charles v. In 1517 he became a member of the Council of Flanders and in 1520 bishop of Palencia. At the time this letter was written, Mota was one of the most powerful men at the imperial court. Despite his show of good will towards Erasmus, the latter's suspicions of him (Epp 1268:77–8, 1302:59–62) may have been well founded. Mota, who was reputed to be 'more ambitious than honest,' may have said what was necessary to please Erasmus' friends at court, such as chancellor Gattinara (Ep 1150), while at the same time currying favour with Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11) in the hope of further ecclesiastical advancement (a cardinal's hat, the archbishopric of Toledo).

It was apparently in the interval between Ep 1268 and the present letter that Erasmus made the unhappy Rhine journey described in Epp 1302 and 1342: 333ff. His aim was to go on to Brabant to pay his court before the emperor's departure for Spain (Ep 1269 n6), and to arrange in person for the payment of his two pensions (see Ep 1245 and n4 to this letter). But on the journey his health quickly broke down. He rested for two days with Johannes Gallinarius (Ep 1307), parish priest in Breisach, then struggled on to Sélestat, where he spent four days with Beatus Rhenanus (Ep 327). Too ill to go on, he turned back to Basel, which he reached only after stopping to rest once more with Gallinarius. Back in Basel, he dispatched Hilarius Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10) with a packet of letters (Epp 1273–6, and doubtless others: see Ep 1281:23–5, 82–3), hoping to accomplish by mail what he could not perform in person.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE BISHOP OF PALENCIA, GREETINGS

Right reverend prelate, the news that you so generously both took my part and spoke well of me before the emperor, and your kind words, gave me the greater pleasure because I neither expected this[1] nor deserved it. But meanwhile the life of those who like myself write books is no better than that of the actors of antiquity who presented a play on the stage before the public. They had to learn their parts, to rehearse their production, to do all that was humanly possible to satisfy their audience – that motley throng, truly a beast of many heads, few of whose members have the same tastes, nor are they always consistent, and, what is worse, the greater part of them are led by prejudice rather than judgment. On their thumbs the poor mountebank is wholly dependent; he must worship the lowest of the mob, and after superhuman exertions thinks himself happy if he has secured a hearing for his play. If he is hissed off the stage, he must find a tree and hang himself. Surely books have to face critics who are no less various, no less difficult to please, no less distorted by prejudice. In one way our fate is the more unfair, in that we put on our show at our own expense, while the actors get their fee. And they, if the dance is a failure, merely look foolish; we, if we fail to please, are heretics.

My own wish has always been not so much to please as to be of use to all men. And all was going well, had not this tragedy of the new gospel interfered with everything; which, when it opened, somehow won enthusiastic plaudits from almost the whole world, but each act proved worse than the last, and it has ended in uproar and madness as a finale. I disliked it when it first came on, for this reason among others that I could see it must end in subversion. I for my part have never approved of truth in a subversive form, and heresy still less. Even so, there are men where you are now who make me out to be one of Luther's party, although their consciences tell them they lie – their object being no doubt to drive me willy-nilly by their spiteful attacks into Luther's camp. For my own part, neither death nor life shall tear me from the society of the Catholic church. How close I am to Luther is shown by Luther's own people, who attack me ferociously with public calumny and vicious pamphlets. I have no wish, however, to claim credit for deserting Luther. Let me be called Luther's man still, if I have ever

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1273

[1] Cf the suspicions about de la Mota expressed in Ep 1268:77–8.

been one. Not but what in the beginning I did disapprove of the subversive clamour of certain monks, who not merely ranted against Luther with spiteful falsehoods worthy of any fishwife, but likewise attacked the ancient tongues and the humanities one and all, while I was shamelessly torn to pieces by name in their public sermons.

Our new pope,[2] with his scholarly wisdom and wise integrity, and at the same time a spirit in our emperor that seems more than human, encourage me to high hopes that this plague may be rooted out in such a way that it may never grow again. This can be done if the roots are cut away from which this plague so often sprouts afresh, one of which is hatred of the Roman curia (whose greed and tyranny were already past bearing), and along with that, much legislation of purely human origin, which was thought to lay a burden on the liberty of Christian people. All these can easily be cured, without setting the world by the ears, by the emperor's authority and the integrity of the new pope. I myself am nobody, but to the best of my ability I do not, and I will not, fail to do my duty. Only let the emperor in his mercy[3] provide that my salary[4] shall be permanent, and ensure that my reputation is kept in good and sound repair against the spite of certain enemies;[5] I shall see to it that he will not regret making me a councillor.[6] My best wishes to your noble self, whose servant, such as I am, I subscribe myself.

Basel, Easter Monday 1522

1274 / To Luis Núñez Coronel Basel, 21 April 1522

Luis Núñez Coronel of Segovia (d 1535), studied at Salamanca and then at Paris, taking his DD in 1514. From 1519 he was councillor, preacher, and confessor at the court of Charles V. In 1521 and 1522 he assisted in the work of the Inquisition at Brussels, Ghent, Bruges, and Antwerp. His opinion of Erasmus was extremely favourable. To Vives he described the Dutch scholar as another Jerome or Augustine (Ep 1281:48–9). After his return to Spain with Charles V in 1522, Coronel became secretary to Alonso Manrique, archbishop of Seville and grand inquisitor of Spain. In this position Coronel was able to assist Erasmus against his Spanish critics, especially during the theological

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[2] Adrian VI (Ep 1304)

[3] The emperor's good will had recently been expressed in Ep 1270.

[4] Ie, his annuity as an imperial councillor. See Epp 370:18n, 1275:58–9, 1276:9, 1287:27–34, 1303:62, 1306:50–1, 1319:21–2, 1341A:1797–8, 1342:101, 286–7.

[5] See Ep 1263 n14.

[6] See Ep 370:18n.

examination of Erasmus' works at Valladolid in 1527 (cf Ep 1334 introduction).

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO LUIS CORONEL, GREETINGS

Honoured sir, Luis Vives, who gave me in passing a sketch of your admirable qualities,[1] had kindled in my mind the desire to win your friendship, and this spark was strongly fanned by Ludwig Baer,[2] who described fortissimo, as they say, and with great warmth your lively intelligence, which to a mastery of theological literature adds an elegant familiarity with mathematics. And now a rare kind of freshness in your attitude and a truly Christian good will towards myself, although a man of no account, have been made fully known to me in a letter from Guy Morillon,[3] so that I regret quite particularly my failure to have secured such a friend, to some extent at least, before I left.[4] I was filled with a desire to pay a flying visit to your part of the world before the emperor's departure.[5] I would have made nothing of my state of health, which has lately been so much weakened by constant illness[6] that I find life a burden; nothing of the length of the journey; nothing of the learned labours[7] which I have now in hand and which are now printing on Froben's presses; nothing of certain other obstacles not lightly to be overlooked. But chiefly I was afraid of the journey, which is more than usually notorious now for robberies.[8] I have often travelled that way successfully in the past; but if anything should happen, it would be the end of me.

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1274

[1] At just about this time Erasmus would have received Vives' notes to Augustine's *De civitate Dei* (Ep 1271:53–4) where, in the note to 13.24 (page 411 of the edition of September 1522), Vives thanks Coronel for the loan of the first volume of the Complutensian Polyglot, calling him a distinguished theologian and commending his zeal for the common good.

[2] Ludwig Baer (Ep 305:201n), who must have known Coronel during his student days at the University of Paris

[3] Not extant; presumably contemporary with Ep 1270

[4] Ie, before Erasmus' departure from Louvain for Basel in the autumn of 1521; see Ep 1242 introduction.

[5] For Spain in May 1522; Ep 1269 n6

[6] See Ep 1256 n2.

[7] See Ep 1294 n9. In addition to the works mentioned there, Erasmus wrote just at this time the *Epistola de esu carnium*, addressed to the bishop of Basel on 21 April and printed by Froben in August; see Epp 1341A:1306–13, 1353 n13, 1293 n8.

[8] On his journey from Louvain to Basel in the autumn of 1521 (n4 above) Erasmus had taken advantage of the protection offered by a troop of disbanded soldiers who were travelling up the Rhine; Epp 1302:17–20, 1342:168–71.

As regards my preface and the paraphrase,[9] I am most grateful for the points you so kindly make. The preface[10] was added without much care, to please the printer, who complained that a few pages would be empty unless I added some trifle or other. Such as it is, however, it is my own child – my miscarriage, if you prefer. One ought not to detest any heresy to such a degree that hatred of it leaves one no courage to point out what is right. Jerome is not afraid to praise virginity because the Marcionites condemned marriage; he is not deterred from recommending marriage to one wife only by Tertullian's condemnation of second marriages. If there is any danger in the widespread reading of the Gospels, why did the apostles put them out in the most widespread language of the day? I do not believe there is any danger, provided the laity read the Scriptures in the manner I there lay down. What Luther's teaching is, I do not know; my paraphrase on Matthew I was moved to undertake more by the authority of Matthäus, cardinal of Sion, than by my own judgment, a fact I do not conceal in the preface.[11] In the apostolic Epistles, if your judgment finds my work more satisfactory, this is due to the subject-matter, and none of my doing. In a version, the sense is rendered literally; in a paraphrase, it is legitimate to add something of your own as well that may make the author's meaning clearer. The scope allowed to the writer of a paraphrase can easily be seen by anyone who compares Themistius[12] with Aristotle. For a paraphrase is not a translation but something looser, a kind of continuous commentary in which the writer and his author retain separate roles.

But how I wish it might be possible for me to have the benefit of your most friendly advice face to face, and correct my manner of writing by the criteria of your most polished judgment! I wonder there can be people in your part of the world so stupid or such shameless liars that they can call me a supporter of Luther. The beginning of this tragedy always distressed me, for I saw that it must end in subversion, although there was some hope that the man would turn over to a more sensible policy. Nor did I like the subversive clamour raised by some noisy rascals before popular audiences. As things are now, Luther's party behave everywhere as though they had

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[9] On Matthew; Ep 1255

[10] Not Ep 1255, but a letter to the reader, dated 14 January 1522, added in order to fill the blank opening sheet. In the letter Erasmus maintained, as he had in the *Paraclesis*, that the Bible should be read not merely by scholars but by all classes, to whom it should be made available in translation. See Allen's introduction to Ep 1255.

[11] That is, in Ep 1255:26–31

[12] A fourth-century philosopher and rhetorician, author of paraphrases of several works of Aristotle

no interest in their own safety. Here, I am so far from being regarded as Luther's man that some of his supporters write and ask me not to use my pen against him, while others threaten me with vicious pamphlets. How I wish they had attacked me with them two years ago! – they would have freed me from a great burden of unpopularity. In Louvain there are two or three people[13] instigated to attack me by private spite, because long ago I gave devoted support to the humanities, which they judge to be unsuited to their own way of life. But it is not like our merciful emperor to hand over a man who labours for the glory of Christ and the honour of the empire to the resentment of such as they. Had I supported Luther even a little, I do not wish to boast what effect I might have had in Germany. But I would sooner meet death ten times over than start or encourage a perilous schism. This is already understood in Germany,[14] and I will see to it that all men soon understand the unflinching course I have taken in this affair. I am confident therefore that a man with your sense of justice will defend me against such shameless falsehoods.

Farewell. From Basel, Easter Monday 1522

1275 / To Jean Glapion Basel, [c 21 April] 1522

First printed in the *Opus epistolarum,* this letter is clearly contemporary with Epp 1273–4 and 1276. Glapion's reply is mentioned in Epp 1299:42. 1300:64, 1331:15, and 1342:282.

Jean Glapion (d 14 September 1522), who was from northern France (probably Maine), studied at the University of Paris and became a Franciscan Observant. In 1520 he became personal confessor to Charles V, over whom he exercised great influence. Erasmus and Glapion met only once, in Brussels in the summer of 1521, but they exchanged letters afterwards (ASD IX-1 154:810–12). This letter is all that survives of that correspondence.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JEAN GLAPION, GREETINGS

For my part, dear Glapion, I think our most intelligent emperor is to be congratulated on this perhaps above all, that he has to advise him a man like you. I entertain a most certain hope that you, singularly uncorrupted as you are by worldly desires, will give that most powerful monarch advice which will tend to the general advantage of the world and to Christ's glory, as I

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[13] See Ep 1263 n14. A third might have been Laurens Laurensen OP (Ep 1166 n6).

[14] Cf Ep 1275:29ff.

think you have done hitherto. Apart from that, your kindness towards me[1] I must acknowledge so often that it makes me blush. I would have made nothing of all else – my state of health,[2] the length of the journey, the risk of being robbed,[3] the work that I have in hand and that is now printing,[4] and a great box of my belongings which has now at last been brought as far as Frankfurt but has not reached me yet – and would eagerly have paid you a flying visit, as surely as I treasure the love of the Lord Jesus, but I was afraid that when I had done everything possible, I might not have found his Majesty the emperor where you are now, for he was said to have been held up for some time already on the coast, waiting for nothing but favourable winds – and winds are the only creatures that do not know an emperor when they see one. I wanted also to visit Calais to greet some of my patrons,[5] who would be there, I thought, with the emperor.

If there is any way in which I can oblige the prince my master, or serve the cause of his honour or the Christian religion, send me a brief note by this young man,[6] who is thoroughly to be trusted. I am to be sure a man who knows how to keep silence. I had already made a fair start with a short treatise on how to end this business of Luther;[7] but ill health has interrupted all my work. In the mean while, I have restrained by both speech and writing[8] many people who were greatly attracted by Luther. I have also made it clear in my published letters[9] that I have never come to an agreement with any of Luther's party, but that business which must end in sedition is a thing I have always disliked. This is by now so well known all over Germany that no true Lutheran wishes me well;[10] some threaten me with vicious pamphlets; others attack me with clamorous abuse, calling me a Pelagian[11] and a time-server instead of a herald of the gospel teaching. I at least shall

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1275

[1] See Ep 1269:6–7.

[2] See Ep 1256 n2.

[3] See Ep 1274 n8.

[4] See Ep 1274 n7.

[5] Erasmus apparently expected some of his English patrons to be among those who crossed to Calais to meet Charles on his way to England.

[6] Hilarius Bertolph; see Epp 1257 n10, and 1281:23.

[7] Erasmus gives a full account of this project in Ep 1341A:1338–1416. The *libellus* would doubtless have amplified the proposals put forward in the *Consilium* of 1520 (Ep 1267 n6), but it was never completed. Cf Ep 1268:86–8.

[8] As, for example, in Ep 1202. Also in Epp 947:40–3, 983:11–18. Cf Ep 1225:298–9.

[9] Such as Epp 961, 967, 1033, 1041. Cf Ep 1225:168–70.

[10] Cf Ep 1274:64–5.

[11] See Ep 1259 n5.

never be torn by either life or death from obedience to the church and from the integrity of the Christian faith.

Yet this is a point, my excellent friend, which I should like you to consider – how unfairly I am treated. I have devoted all this labour to advancing the general standard of knowledge and the Christian religion; I have always urged Luther's party not to pursue this subversive course; I have never let myself be influenced either by reasoning or by spiteful attacks and threats to yield even a scrap of ground to their faction, though I could have aroused great tumults here had I been the man they say I am; and now I am handed over to the private resentment of certain people to be torn to shreds and am forced into a position where it is not safe for me to live either in your part of the world or in Germany – here on account of Luther's party, who are said to be planning some great political disturbance I know not what, and there because of two or three men[12] who are my enemies on personal grounds. My genius, which you call divine, is small enough, to be sure; but such as it is, it shall always be devoted to Christ's glory and, next after him, to the honour of the prince my master.

And I might still be able to support these labours for some years to come, if I were allowed peaceful and uninterrupted leisure. But I cannot fail to be aware of the spite with which some men attack me and the things they are preparing to do, their object no doubt being to drive me willy-nilly into the Lutheran camp. But this they shall never do. They shall kill me before they corrupt me, and I will revenge myself on them in a way that shall best prove my integrity in the sight of all men. Such revenge will suffice for a Christian spirit. I like Brabant greatly, and especially that rural retreat at Anderlecht[13] –if only the prince in his mercy would give the word for my annuity[14] to be permanent and would defend me against certain men who seek to gratify their private spite under the guise of religion.

How bitter that spite is, you may guess from this instance among many. A decree was passed in Cologne by the Dominicans that all books written by Erasmus should be thrown out of the libraries of the entire order.[15] Among these are the New Testament and Jerome! And there are

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[12] See Ep 1263:1–3.

[13] See Ep 1271 n31.

[14] See Ep 1273 n4.

[15] It has proved impossible to verify this report. On 19 September Michael Hummelberg (Ep 1253 n6) reported having heard that certain of Erasmus' opinions had been condemned by the theologians of Cologne; BRE Ep 226.

men in Louvain who still openly display the old hatred of the humanities.[16] Their rash behaviour is likely to end in open subversion, and it ought to be restrained by the authority of the prince and the prelates. If any point emerges on which Luther's opinion ought to be refuted, let them do this with appropriate arguments and clear evidences from the Scriptures. On other men, who have not been condemned by the authority of universities or popes or the prince, let them keep silence and not defile the place where they should preach the gospel with their foolish and poisonous scurrilities. My own heart is set on defending the Christian faith and advancing the honour of the emperor; but that I may be enabled to fulfil my desire lies largely in the emperor's own hand, who has in his hand the sum of things. I do not ask him for great positions. Let him but give me leisure and tranquillity, and I will see to it by every means in my power that his Majesty shall never regret his humble councillor.[17] You wish me to put my trust in deeds not words; so you say in your letter. Unless at no distant date I keep my promise[18] you shall list the name Erasmus among men of straw.

When I was writing this, I had not yet made up my own mind definitely about my journey; my mind is so much disposed to your part of the world that, with even a very little weight in the scale, I should follow this Dromo[19] of mine. Meanwhile let your deeds show that you are a true friend, and may the Lord Jesus bless your pious intentions. The primacy of the pope has now been so clearly asserted by Cajetanus,[20] Silvester,[21] and Eck,[22] that there is no need of help from me; for Catharinus'[23] handling of the question is not so skilful. My views on the sacraments I have now made clear in some

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[16] See Epp 1299:10–14, and 1330:53–6. On 3 September Paul Volz had heard that Erasmus' paraphrases had been burned at Louvain University; BRE Ep 225 (page 310). See also Ep 1342:644–7.

[17] See Ep 370:18n.

[18] As Allen suggests, this promise seems to refer not to the completion of the *libellus* against Luther (lines 23–4 and n7 of this letter) but rather to the completion of such projects as the edition of Augustine (Ep 1309) despite the bitter opposition of conservative theologians.

[19] Ie, Bertolph (n6 above). Dromo is the name of a slave in two of Terence's plays, *Heautontimorumenos* and *Adelphi*.

[20] Ep 256:49n

[21] Silvester Prierias; Ep 872:19n

[22] Eck (Ep 769) had published his *De primatu Petri adversus Ludderum* at Ingolstadt in 1520.

[23] Lancellotto de' Politi of Siena (c 1484–1553), who took the name Ambrosius Catharinus Politus when he joined the Dominican order, denounced Luther in two works: *Apologia pro veritate catholice fidei* (Florence: G. Giunta 1520), and *Excusatio disputationis* (ibidem 1521).

verses added to the small book known as the Cato.[24] On the same subject there is a treatise by the king of England,[25] which some people in Rome and here wrongly suppose to be by me.[26] How fortunate these suspicions would be for me if only they could change their country – if the English would suspect what they suspect in Germany! I suppose this guess was suggested by the style. For the king when he was a boy read nothing more diligently than my writings, and from them he may perhaps have picked up something of my style, if indeed there is anything of mine in his book.

But really I am too discourteous, taking the time of a man of your eminence, so burdened with business, with such a talkative letter; and indeed I am very busy myself. Farewell, and show yourself a true friend.

Basel, 1522

1276 / To Jean de Carondelet — Basel, 23 April 1522

Jean de Carondelet (1469–1544?), whose father (also Jean, d 1501) had been Burgundian chancellor, rose to power and prominence in Hapsburg service in the Netherlands. In 1497 he joined the household of Archduke Philip and in 1504 became a member of his council. In 1515 he was appointed to Charles' council and accompanied him to Spain in 1517. On the death of Le Sauvage (Ep 301:38n), Carondelet was briefly acting chancellor of Castile. Returning to the Netherlands, he quickly became the chief counselor to Margaret of Austria, Charles' aunt and regent. Dean of Besançon since 1493, he was appointed archbishop of Palermo in 1519 and provost of St Donatian's at Bruges in 1520. From 1531 to 1540 he was president of the Privy Council of the Netherlands.

Erasmus found in Carondelet a reliable patron (cf Ep 1320:14–18) to whom he could write about such delicate matters as his annuity from the emperor and to whom he dedicated his edition of Hilary (Ep 1334).

This letter first appeared in the *Opus epistolarum*. Carondelet's reply is mentioned in Epp 1299:42 and 1331:18.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JEAN DE CARONDELET, ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO, GREETINGS

I am told, my Lord Archbishop, in letters from my friends[1] to present myself

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[24] Ie, in the *Institutum christiani hominis carmine pro pueris*; Epp 298, 679

[25] Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martin. Lutherum* (London: Pynson 1521)

[26] Cf Epp 1298:16–19, 1313:74–92.

1276

[1] Cf Ep 1269:11–13.

in your part of the world before the emperor's departure; but the bearer[2] informed me that his setting out for England was being advanced, so that I fear even my letter may prove fruitless. I will follow,[3] however, if I find that the emperor will remain longer. But meanwhile may I ask you, if I seem to have done anything of value for the humanities by my labours, to strengthen my case with your support, that my annuity[4] may remain intact and that the emperor's favour may defend me against the baseless attacks of certain shameless individuals. My conduct here is such that all Luther's party hate me passionately and pile slanders on me; some of them even tear me to pieces in pamphlets. For my part, I shall never prove false either to the faith of Christ or to the glory of the emperor. Need I say more? I shall see to it that he never regrets making me a member of his council.[5] In olden days four-footed beasts that had caused damage were delivered over to punishment; how cruelly unfair that I for doing service to the public should be delivered over to certain noxious beasts, or rather to jealousy, which is a pest more virulent than any viper! May Almighty Jesus have your Highness always in his keeping.

Basel, Wednesday after Easter 1522

1277 / From Juan de Vergara Brussels, 24 April 1522

Juan de Vergara of Toledo (1492–1557) studied at the University of Alcalá (MA 1514, DD 1517) and contributed translations of Greek versions of several Old Testament books to the Complutensian Polyglot. In 1516–17 he became secretary to Cardinal Jiménez, the archbishop of Toledo. In the spring of 1520 Vergara sailed to Flanders to join Jiménez' successor as archbishop, Guillaume de Croy (d 1521), the son of the chancellor, Chièvres (Ep 532:30n). That summer Vergara met Erasmus at Bruges and Louvain and quickly undertook the thankless task of trying to mediate peace between Erasmus and Zúñiga (Ep 1260 n36). When Vergara wrote this letter, he was still in the Netherlands, attached as a chaplain to the imperial court, but he returned to Spain later the same year. There he was a constant supporter of humanist scholars and remained sincerely devoted to Erasmus. In the 1530s this devotion earned him repeated trouble with the Inquisition.

This letter was first published by Allen from a manuscript (an eighteenth-century copy) that was in the so-called 'Heine Collection' at Munich. For

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[2] Hilarius Bertolph; see Epp 1257 n10 and 1281:23.

[3] Cf Ep 1275:82–4.

[4] Cf Ep 1273 n4.

[5] See Ep 370:18n.

details on this collection, the subsequent fate of which is unknown, see Allen IV 620–2 and CWE 8 336. Erasmus' reply is Ep 1312.

JUAN DE VERGARA TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

The *Apologia*[1] in which you answered Zúñiga's *Annotationes*[2] I sent[3] to Zúñiga himself in Rome, as I told you I would in St Peter's at Louvain;[4] and in doing so, I urged him in my letter (for he is a friendly person) to bring the dispute to a final end at that point, and to overlook all minor causes of offence and make friends with you, a thing which all scholars alike must wish to see. I also said that if I could be of any service in making peace, I would help him all I could. I reminded him of Lee's efforts[5] – how unpopular they had proved with all scholars[6] and how little glory they had brought to him personally. I added a good deal in praise of you, though compared with what I feel it was very little. None of this moved him much; he seems so determined not to alter course that he threatens all over again an even more savage war, according to a letter he sent me[7] – a ferocious letter, all outrages and thunderbolts – it is no longer a matter of javelin and dart, he threatens a whole artillery of missiles, mangonels, and catapults, with which henceforward he mows down his adversaries in swathes, routs them, pursues them, and lays them flat. Not only will he answer your defence; he will show quite clearly that the second edition of the New Testament and the notes on Jerome and many of your other works are stuffed with ten thousand errors and flavoured with Lutheran impiety. Nor is this activity his own special preserve: he says a large and picked force of learned Italians is now mobilizing, who will make a sortie and bear down headlong on your writings.

Meantime, while he is getting together all the tackle needed for a pitched battle, a book has been sent out like a reconnaissance-party, not by

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1277

[1] *Apologia respondens ad ea quae Jacobus Lopis Stunica taxaverat in prima duntaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione* (Louvain: Dirk Martens, September 1521). An enlarged version was printed in the *Apologiae omnes* (Basel: Froben, October 1521– February 1522); critical edition by H.J. de Jonge in ASD IX-2.

[2] See Ep 1260 n36.

[3] On 10 October 1521; see Vergara's letter to Zúñiga in CWE 8 337.

[4] Erasmus may have been in Louvain in mid-September 1521 in connection with the printing of the *Apologia* in reply to Zúñiga; see Ep 1235:36.

[5] Edward Lee (1482–1544), the English theologian with whom Erasmus had a long controversy over Lee's critical notes on the *Novum Testamentum*; see Epp 765 introduction, 1037 introduction, and 1341A:823–30.

[6] See Ep 1083 introduction.

[7] Dated 9 January 1522; printed in CWE 8 340–3

any means with Zúñiga himself as its author (he of course captains heavier troops), but one Sancho Carranza of Miranda,[8] a Spaniard, a man of high position and reputation among the theologians of Alcalá, who handles the business of the Spanish church in Rome. Gathering from my letter to Zúñiga how high an opinion I have of you and how much I admire you as a scholar of great distinction, he naturally supposed this judgment to arise from close familiarity and friendship with you. He therefore sent the book to me as a friend of yours, and asks me in the prefatory letter[9] to assure you that his feelings towards you are not at all hostile, but entirely open-minded and respectful. Indeed you will see this for yourself much more clearly from the letter. I would like to add that the man is a real expert in philosophy and theology of the subtle sort, with a critical mind, a balanced judgment, and wide reading in that field. In short, in the study of philosophical trivialities he has few rivals; besides which his character is upright, modest, and far from difficult to get on with. This leads me to believe that he did not think of writing this out of jealousy or spite, but was swept away by a strong and by no means improper spirit of contention, such as often exists on literary subjects between learned men, with no loss of personal good will. But all this you will discover with far greater insight than mine as you read the book; so let me in the mean while refrain from any premature verdict.

As for myself, pray think of me as a passionate devotee of the humanities, for thus you will recognize at the same time that I must be devoted to Erasmus, whose cause I have always regarded as closely linked with the cause of liberal studies. For there is one blessing I clearly owe to my destiny, which in other respects has been far from generous: having been consigned in early boyhood to harsher studies (but the decision was taken by others), I preferred the gentler Muses all the time and more civilized learning to all trifling, however ingenious, but decided that humane learning must be reconciled and allied with the more severe speculations of philosophy, divine and human. This is just what you have set yourself to do in our time, with immense efforts but with great success, and all men of

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[8] Sancho Carranza of Miranda in Navarre (d 1531), theologian at Alcalá. In March 1522 he published at Rome, where he lived 1520–3, *Carranzae opusculum in quasdam Erasmi annotationes* (A. de Trino), in which his criticisms were moderate and respectful in tone. Erasmus reprinted the work, together with his *Apologia de tribus locis quos ut recte taxatos a Stunica defenderat S. Caranza theologus*, with the *Epistola de esu carnium* (Basel: Froben 6 August 1522). The text is in LB IX 401–32.

[9] Ie, the prefatory epistle to Vergara, 27 December 1521, in Carranza's *Opusculum* (n8 above). The passage Vergara refers to is quoted in Bataillon 132 n1.

good will owe you not only hearty support and best wishes but all the help and assistance in their power. And though to help you is not possible for a modest creature like myself, I can at least promise my support without fear of perjury; and so I do, as best I can, and long have done so too.

And so, dear Erasmus my most learned friend, although I feel it to be unnecessary, I do urge you and exhort you and adjure you, by the most fruitful outcome of your labours, not to relax your efforts in the cause of good literature, which is raising its head but still faces toil and trouble, and not to let the crazy prejudice of certain wretches deter you from so lofty and so honourable an enterprise. This is a plague of long standing. There have long been, and there always will be, certain bitter and malignant characters who love a fight, foolish, ignorant, and voluble, who, when their purblind eyes have once perceived the splendour of a learning they do not possess, move without hesitation against everything good and profitable that appears in print. Insidiously at first and privily they carp at it; then cast off all shame and attack it openly, tracking down mistakes in it with the greatest subtlety in all directions, concentrating on other men's errors without concern for their own, for they never publish anything. And you ought to stand firm and unmoved against the lot of them, rather than engage them individually.

By this I do not mean to convey that I put Zúñiga or Sancho in that class, and mean to attack them as malignant critics. They are my friends, and in themselves they are good men and good scholars, very far removed from any fault of the kind. But when I see everywhere so many men like that (monstrosities rather than men I would call them, were they not so common), it really makes me fear that the resolution of good men, men like yourself, may one day be unable to withstand such frenzy. But why run on about this at such length? I am more than satisfied, provided it is clear to you that I am a man sincerely devoted to liberal studies, and one who for their sake will never fail to stand by you with all the devotion and all the assistance that may lie within my modest powers.

The book itself, together with this letter, I was minded to give to Herman (surname?),[10] a man who is (as I can clearly see) a great admirer of yours; he is a new acquaintance, whom I took to immediately, able and agreeable and an unusually good scholar. He is the only person I have allowed to see the book, he having offered to transmit it to you, for I did not like the idea of its passing from hand to hand until you had seen it. If you do sometime decide to write an answer, mind you do not forget your usual moderation – for your own sake first of all, and then for the sake of the

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[10] Perhaps Herman Lethmaet (Ep 1320)

author himself, who speaks of you throughout the work with the greatest respect, and partly, please, for my sake too. If anything further appears from Zúñiga while the emperor has not yet set off for Spain, I will arrange to send it to you, provided there is someone to whom I can safely give it. Farewell, and think of me among your friends.

Brussels, 24 April 1522

Herman having returned the book to me some days later, saying he has no opportunity of a courier going in your direction, I have entrusted to Luis Vives the task of conveying it to you,[11] being myself about to sail for Spain any day now. If you think of sending any answer (which would be highly welcome), a letter can conveniently reach me through that same Luis. Farewell.

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, the distinguished theologian

1278 / To Andrea Alciati — Basel, 25 April 1522

This letter was first published by Allen. The manuscript, in a secretary's hand with corrections by Erasmus, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). The Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel has a copy made by Bonifacius Amerbach (MS G.II.13.131).

For Alciati, see Epp 1250, 1261.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ANDREA ALCIATI

Greeting. Other people, when they find a reliable courier, usually write at length about everything. I on the other hand think that I can write very briefly for the same reason, having got Bonifacius Amerbach[1] to carry my letter, for I could be blessed with no one more completely reliable or more devoted to us both. Why need I write at all, when there is nothing about me that he does not know? About that pamphlet[2] I beg you most seriously not to worry. Pyrrhus'[3] death distresses me, and I welcome all the more your true friendship, which has not allowed your friend's memory to perish.[4]

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[11] From Ep 1281:39–40 it appears that Vergara did not in fact give the book to Vives.

1278

[1] Ep 408. On Amerbach's journey to Avignon, see Ep 1288 introduction.

[2] See Ep 1261 introduction.

[3] Jean Pyrrhus d'Angleberme (d 1521), lecturer in law in Orléans, had studied Greek with Erasmus in Paris and corresponded with him at intervals thereafter.

[4] Alciati had composed an epitaph for d'Angleberme's tomb; see *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* (Paris 1855–66) II 659–60.

A year ago some Germans I could name[5] who are too much devoted to me reprinted an immense volume of my letters, among them some which I fear may get me into serious trouble, especially in these days when everything is instantly seized upon as material for suspicion or calumny. At the imperial court I can scarcely hold my ground, thanks to certain persons[6] who will have it that I am responsible for Luther's faction, not because they really suspect this, which they themselves know to be absolutely false, but partly for the pleasure of doing me harm whatever the excuse and partly in order to push me willy-nilly into Luther's camp – which, however, they will never succeed in doing. On the other side, here among the Germans those same logic-choppers who wish for my ruin are spreading a monstrous rumour among Luther's partisans that I am preparing large, ferocious volumes[7] to attack, and indeed utterly to overthrow, all the citadels of Luther's supporters. So they too rage against me, and already have books with long teeth at hand with which to rend me limb from limb. So things are quite topsy-turvy: men denounced as heretics by pope and emperor regard me as a heretic, unless I am willing to turn heretic. There is in Rome one Zúñiga, a Spaniard, who has now spewed up a second volume[8] loaded with violent abuse directed at me. How I wish Luther's party had attacked me in print two years ago! They would at least have taken a load of ill will off my back. But no tempest shall divert me from the course I have set.

Unless I were sincerely and singularly devoted to you both, Alciati and Bonifacius, I should envy each of you the other's society. My life upon it, I have never seen anything more sincere and genuine than that young man, or a truer friend. He never tires of singing the praises of his friend Alciati. I only hope that envious Fate will keep her hands off him, for his gifts are outstanding; one day he will be the pride of his native Germany. I know that you with your generous heart will do all you can for a man whom you have known and loved for so long. Otherwise I would ask you urgently to add to your kindness towards him on the grounds of a recommendation from me. Farewell, my most excellent friend, and let the name of Erasmus stand written among those who cordially wish you well.

Basel, the Friday in Easter week 1522

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[5] Ie, the Froben editors responsible for the *Epistolae ad diversos*, the printing of which had begun a year ago; see Epp 1206 and 1258 n15.

[6] See Ep 1263:1–3. For Erasmus' efforts to secure his reputation at the imperial court, see Epp 1269, 1273–6, 1300.

[7] Cf Ep 1275 n7.

[8] See Ep 1260 n45.

1279 / From Leonhard Müller St Georgenberg, 7 May 1522

This letter was first published in LB. The original manuscript is in the Rehdiger Collection in the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.95).

Leonhard Müller (d 1525) was during the last ten years of his life abbot of the Benedictine house at St Georgenberg in the Inn valley, about twenty-six kilometers south of Innsbruck. According to the records of the community, he was a learned man and a wise ruler who undertook the rebuilding of the monastery, which had burned down in 1448.

LEONHARD, BY THE GRACE OF GOD ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF ST GEORGENBERG IN THE INN VALLEY ETC, SENDS GREETING

You must not be surprised, Erasmus most learned of men, to receive this letter from a stranger. A stranger I may be to you, but you have been for a long time very familiar to me, and I converse daily with the more exalted half of you,[1] for among abbots there are several, and among monks a great many, who are your zealous followers. I however am specially devoted to you, for I have a special aversion to the superstition of many abbots and monks, combined as it is with a hatred of honourable studies, and a great devotion to you and others like you. For I see no purpose in the monastic habit except that we should be good Christians and not consider ourselves cut off from men of any honourable calling.

And why then do I write to you? I am sending the bearer of this, our Brother Kilian,[2] a long-standing disciple of yours, who much desires to see you, to pursue the study of the humanities in Basel. May I beg you, my dear sir, with your unfailing kindness towards all men of good understanding, to help him with your support and recommendation. Pray believe that I make this request in few words but with all the emphasis of which I am capable. I have an impoverished monastery which, when almost ruined by the negligence of my predecessors, was entrusted to me for restoration, and

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1279

[1] Ie, his books

[2] Not much is known about Kilian Praus, who sometimes signed himself Kilian Clemens (BRE Ep 239). In May 1522, on his way to Basel to pursue the studies mentioned here, he visited Johann Botzheim in Constance (Ep 1285:55–7). In Basel, Beatus Rhenanus (Ep 327) took an interest in him, helping him to obtain a BA and make plans for further study. In 1523 Praus moved to Sélestat, where he may have worked for a printer. Because of his associations with Eppendorf and Hutten (Epp 1283 n4, 1331 n24), he later had to defend himself against Erasmus' suspicions that he was siding with those two former friends turned enemies (Ep 1449).

hence I have had severe difficulty in providing this brother of ours with money for his essential expenses. One word from you will be able to help him in all directions, both in living in your town at less expense and in qualifying (as they call it) for some degree in less than the traditional period of time. For I hear that the practice is still maintained in certain universities of allowing no one the title to a degree until he has fulfilled the stated time.

If this letter is written by my secretary in German script, please take this in good part. Farewell.

From our monastery, 7 May 1522

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, most learned and eloquent teacher and expositor of theology

1280

This letter to Maartin Davidts has been redated to 1528 and will be published in volume 14 of this edition.

1280A / From Caspar Ursinus Velius Vienna, c May 1522

This letter was first published in Ursinus' *In hoc libello habentur Oratio dominica ... Epistola ad D. Erasmum Rhoterodamum* (Vienna: J. Singriener 1524). Although Allen knew of the existence of the letter (see his note to Ep 1267:3), he did not include it in his edition. At the suggestion of Professor Peter G. Bietenholz, who had used the letter in his own research ('Erasmus und die letzten Lebensjahre Reuchlins' *Historische Zeitschrift* 240 [1985] 63), the Editorial Board decided to include the letter in the CWE edition.

Caspar Ursinus Velius (Kaspar Bernhard), c 1493–1539, of Świdnica in Silesia was a canon at Wrocław, a gifted poet, and a successful teacher of Greek at the University of Vienna. He left Vienna in July 1521, evidently to escape the plague. Wishing to meet Erasmus, he went to Basel, where the university records indicate that he matriculated on 1 August, although other evidence suggests that he may not have arrived in town until a few days later (AK Ep 817 introduction). Sometime in October he moved on to Freiburg im Breisgau (ibidem n1, Ep 1242), where he registered at the university on 1 February 1522 and attended the lectures of Zasius (Epp 1252, 1266). Soon after 23 March (Ep 1267 n2) he embarked upon his return journey to Vienna. This letter is Ursinus' account of that journey.

An approximate month-date can be assigned. Ursinus arrived in Passau on or about Easter, 20 April (lines 131–4). Proceeding to Vienna, he arrived after having been away for 'ten months' (line 183). On 26 May he addressed a letter to Beatus Rhenanus from Vienna (BRE Ep 223). Assuming that Ursinus wrote this letter soon after his return, the date 'c May 1522' is a reasonable estimate.

The letter is written in verse. Versified accounts of journeys have a long history in Latin poetry, going back to Lucilius and Horace. Ursinus' poem owes much, including the use of dactylic hexameters, to Horace's 'Journey to Brundisium' (*Satires* 1.5). Other borrowings from Horace are mentioned in the notes. This translation into English pentameters is the work of Ann and Alexander Dalzell.

Leaving the borders of th' Helvetian land,
Where sturdy farmers plough the Rauric fields,[1]
I said farewell to lovely Basel's walls –
The town is German though its name is Greek[2] –
And reached a region, rich despite its size,
A region chiefly known for grain and vines,
Whose people rose in arms to oust their duke.[3]
There noble Reuchlin warmly welcomed me
To his small city, washed by Neckar's stream,[4]
And when he read the graceful note you sent,
Received me, though a stranger, to his home.
We lingered over dinner, as we talked
About Erasmus the magnificent.

From here I made my way through Swabian towns
To Danube and the walls of smiling Ulm.
My thought was here to buy a little boat
And drift downstream, borne on the river's flood.
But some rapacious merchant wrecked that plan
By leasing all the boats at bargain rates.
We boarded cheerfully – the wind was right –
And set our course for ancient Lauingen.

* * * * *

1280A

[1] The Raurici or Rauraci, mentioned in Caesar's *Bellum gallicum*, were a Gallic tribe who lived in Switzerland in the region of Basel.

[2] Ursinus incorrectly derives the name of the city from the Greek *βασιλεύς* (king).

[3] Duke Ulrich of Württemberg (ruled 1498–1519, 1534–50), whose mistreatment of both subjects and neighbours caused the Swabian League, an alliance of South-German princes and cities, to invade Württemberg in 1519 and force him into exile. After being restored to his duchy in 1534, Ulrich introduced the Reformation there.

[4] Stuttgart, where Reuchlin (Ep 290) spent his last years

But here our crafty host showed us to bed
Before we'd had our fill. When morning came,
He packed us off with nothing for our lunch.

Then dawned for us a most ill-omened day.
As Phoebus'[5] car forsook the crest of heaven,
A sudden tempest whirled across our course,
Boatman and barge were dashed against a bridge.
Then panic filled my heart: I seized the pole,
And begging heaven for help, made one great leap,
And nimbly reached the bank and marshy shore.
The boatman used the paddle[6] for support,
And safely swam to shore. With help from me,
He fixed a stake and tied the hawsers fast.
Soaked by the waves and trembling, all the rest
Leaped overboard and, linking arm in arm,
Managed to struggle safely to the bank.

We walked to Verda[7] under thundering skies.
Rain pelted down in torrents from the heavens.
A kindlier host received us than before,
An older man, who with his pretty wife
Set off for bed as soon as it was dark:
His portly steward attended all our cares.

During the morning hours the boatman knocked,
Calling us forth – the barge had been repaired.
He put us all on board, and sturdy youths
Bent to the oars in turn. When we had passed
The Histrian bridge, where Lech with waters wild
Enters the Danube,[8] Phoebus stood beyond
The mid-point of the sky. Fierce hunger growled
Within our famished bellies. All our minds
Were dominated by the thought of food.

* * * * *

[5] Phoebus Apollo, the sun-god in whose chariot the sun moves across the sky

[6] Probably a long oar used to steer the boat, though the Latin is not clear

[7] *Verda* (or *Werda*) *danubiana*, ie, Donauwörth

[8] This is a puzzle. There was a bridge on the river Lech near the point where it meets the Danube. But it seems unlikely that Ursinus would have 'passed' a bridge some distance up the Lech or that he would have called it 'Histrian,' ie, Danubian.

We left the boat and found a wretched hut,
Smoke-filled and poor, whose owner took us in.
It was his rule never to eat cooked food
And to abstain on certain days from wine.
Wishing to bind me by his strange belief,
He set before me water and coarse bread.
A boy then followed with a dish of salt.[9]

We had to leave with bellies angry still[10]
And sweep the sluggish stream with stronger oars,
Till late at night we came to Ingolstadt,
And soothed our barking stomachs[11] there with food.
But brief the rest our weary limbs received,
For soon before the rosy-fingered bride
Of old Tithonus[12] with her saffron robe
Had spread her kindly light upon the earth,
The boatman's voice rang in our sleepy ears
And ordered us to board our floating bark.

Then did our little boat, impelled by oars,
Race down the headlong current till it reached
That city ringed with hills where grapes are picked
To make a wine more sharp than vinegar.[13]
All of us rushed ashore with thoughts of food.

Now at the inn there lived a crafty cat.
It happened that the simple serving maid
Failed to observe the creature's crafty wiles
As from the plate it dragged our tasty fish.
The angry mistress chased the fleeing maid,
And round her head flew blackened pots and pans
And greasy plates. Meanwhile we gathered up
From rapier talons, jaws, and stubborn teeth
The stolen fish, our spoiled, half-eaten meal.

* * * * *

[9] Cf Horace *Satires* 2.2.18: 'Bread and salt will appease your barking stomach well enough.'

[10] Horace *Satires* 2.8.4

[11] See n9 above.

[12] Aurora, goddess of the dawn; cf Virgil *Aeneid* 7.26.

[13] Perhaps Kelheim

Thence did we make our way to Regensburg
(Named from the river Regen), once a rich,
But now a humble city; for its wealth
Has shamefully declined since it became
More than a hundred years ago the prey
Of filthy Jews. At dawn we all set out,
Changing our barge for a much larger craft.

The number of our company increased,
Because the boatman, grasping after gain,
Packed more on board. A mighty cry arose
As we besought the gods for gentle winds
And raised to heaven's host our artless hymns.

There was a soldier in our company,
Charming and handsome, elegantly dressed,
Who, with his gentle talk, tried to console
A girl who cried and sobbed incessantly.
His words had no effect, and when he asked
The reason for her sorrow, she replied,
'My tears are for a lover left behind
Whose bed and board for many years I've shared,
And always in his manner he's been kind.'
This marvellously witty, genial knight
Began to say such cheerful, funny things,
So interspersed with lively wit and jest,
That even children, cruelly bereft
Of both their parents, would have laughed aloud
While leading the procession to the grave.
She like Niobe sat,[14] by nothing moved,
Till, pitying her tears, the knight spoke thus:
'O might you sooner perish, gleaming stars
That light the universe, than she destroy
Such starry eyes with tears! Th' Oebalian twins[15]
Guide sailors through strange waters, but her eyes

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[14] Niobe, wife of Amphion, king of Thebes, whom Zeus turned into a stone that shed tears in memory of her children, who had been killed by Apollo and Diana

[15] 'Oebalian' (from Oebalus, king of Sparta) is used in classical poetry as an ornamental epithet meaning 'Spartan.' The Spartan twins are Castor and Pollux, the traditional helpers of sailors in peril on the sea.

Propel her amorous lovers where she wills.'
At that fine speech all smiled a happy smile;
She dried her eyes and laughed enchantingly.

And now the sight of Passau on its wedge[16]
Puts thoughts of profit in the boatman's mind.
He tells the boy to extricate the fare
From every passenger. Our soldier friend
Conceals three comrades underneath a pile
Of sacks and matting, setting us on top.
The simple child is cheated of the fare.
When his ill-humoured master learns the trick
And we have left and gone our separate ways,
He chides the boy for sloth and sends him off –
No dinner and a cold night out of doors!

The forty days were past, the festal day
Had dawned, that welcome time, when for mankind
The long-awaited freedom comes again
Of eating what one wills.[17] The world rejoiced.
I went to church, then visited my friends,
Who joyed to see the long-lost traveller.
Thus passed two days: the third saw me again
Back on the river, parted from my friends,
Though hard it was to leave such company.

Passing the walls of Linz, we sailed downstream
Until we saw the town of Mauthausen,
Tamed by th' imperious power of Vulcan's fire;[18]
The north wind's blast had fanned the deadly flames.
Here the whole night I hardly slept a wink,
My left side punctured by th' unyielding bed.
A year-old infant wailed with goatlike sound,
But nothing could arouse his sleeping nurse.
Everyone heard his bitter, tearful cries,
As endlessly he pleaded for the breast.

* * * * *

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[16] The old city of Passau lies on a wedge of land between the Inn and the Danube.
[17] Easter: 20 April 1522
[18] Vulcan was the Roman god of fire. No information is available about a fire in Mauthausen at this time.

The day that dawned was radiantly bright.
The cargo was in place; the boatman blew
The signal on his raucous horn. At once
A motley troop of travellers rushed the ship.
Look at that man, dragging his wife along!
He leaps on board, extends his hand to hers
Across the stern. Thoughtless, she sets her foot
Upon some fish-tanks moored along the bank
Like little boats, not thinking she would sink.
But down she sinks, into the icy stream
Beyond her waist. Seizing her by the head,
Tugging her arms, we fish her up half-faint –
A young and pretty wench. Her husband's face,
From fear and anger mixed, turned white as death.

I tried then to console her if I could
With pleasant trifles; talked of Pyrrha's flood[19]
And how the same will one day come to us
When once Aquarius inverts the urns;[20]
Then all together mountains, fields, and towns
(Dreadful to think upon!) will be submerged
By ocean, and the land will disappear.
Such was the portent of some cruel star,
The fearful prophecy of men who know
The will of heaven and can unlock the minds
Of all the gods,[21] as if from Jove's own lips

* * * * *

[19] Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha were the only survivors in the classical myth of the flood; cf Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.313–415.

[20] Aquarius, the water-carrier, one of the signs of the zodiac. He is represented in ancient art with one, or sometimes two, urns.

[21] The reference is to the astrological prediction that a second universal deluge would engulf the world on 25 February 1524. This prediction had its origin in an almanac by Johann Stöffler von Justingen (1451–1531) that was printed at Ulm in 1499 and reissued at Venice seven times in the period 1504–22. Stöffler did not actually predict a flood, but his observation that profound consequences would ensue from an extraordinary number of planetary conjunctions 'in a watery sign' in February 1524 caused vulgar astrologers to jump to the conclusion that there would be another universal deluge. These predictions apparently caused widespread apprehension. See Lynn Thorndike *A History of Magic and Experimental Science* IV (New York 1934) 483 and V (New York 1941) 181. Ursinus is clearly mocking the prophecy.

They knew the future and were given a place
At all the feasts and councils of the Twelve.[22]

And now our ship was driven by favouring winds
All day along the pleasant river's flow
Until it brushed the sprawling docks that form
Pannonian Vienna's[23] anchorage.
All disembarked with pleasure and approached
The famous city walls, which I last saw
Ten months ago. Dear Collimitius[24]
And all my friends were there, safely returned
As if from exile; for the dreadful plague
Had forced them to escape to diverse lands.
I greeted all. Gundelius had been last
To make the journey back from chilly lands[25]
– I noticed that his hair was turning grey.
No man now lives more charming, none more dear
To Decius,[26] the patron of our group,
Who loves those studies which the gods protect,
Augur Apollo[27] and the Muses chaste.
It was his passion for his new-found wife,

* * * * *

[22] Ie, the Olympian deities

[23] Ie, Vienna in the Roman province of Pannonia as opposed to Vienna (Vienne) in Gallia Narbonensis

[24] Collimitius was the name taken by Georg Tannstetter of Rain in Bavaria (1482–1535). He became professor of medicine and mathematics at the University of Vienna and personal physician to Emperor Maximilian and Archduke Ferdinand. On 20 March 1523 Tannstetter, himself a well-known astrologer, addressed to Archduke Ferdinand a *Libellus consolatorius* debunking the idea of a deluge in 1524. See Thorndike (n21 above) v 221–5; *Neue Deutsche Biographie* III (Berlin 1957) 322–3.

[25] Philipp Gundelius of Passau (1493–1567), a doctor of law who in 1518 became the successor of Vadianus (Ep 1314 n5) as professor of rhetoric at Vienna. Fleeing Vienna in 1521 to escape the plague, he went to Cracow, the home of his patron Decius (see following note), where he taught law. After his return to Vienna, he devoted the rest of his academic career to law, becoming dean of the faculty in 1530 and rector of the university in 1540. His publications, none of them in the field of law, include poems, speeches, and editions of classical and humanist authors. See the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* x (Leipzig 1879) 124–5.

[26] The German-Polish businessman and statesman Justus Decius (Ep 1341A n210), who lived in Cracow

[27] Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 4.376.

I'm sure, which kept him later than the rest.
His marriage was a secret, no one guessed,
Till with a stepson he returned at last.

Thus to this city came I wearily;
Here ends my letter, here my odyssey.

1281 / From Juan Luis Vives — Bruges, 20 May 1522

For the source of this letter, see Ep 1256 introduction. The letter was obviously written in several stages (see lines 70–1). The first stage ends at line 40. Then Vives had his interview with Coronel and added lines 41–57. The paragraph beginning at line 58 is probably also a subsequent addition. From the movements of the court (see n16), it appears that the first part of the letter cannot be dated before 15 May. If the date of the bishop of Liège's arrival in Bruges were known, a more precise dating would be possible.

VIVES TO ERASMUS

The letter[1] you wrote me on 20 March arrived on 7 May; how it took so long to come I do not know. I gave[2] the chancellor[3] the letter you wrote to him; when he had read the address, he smiled as he broke the seal and turning to me – Narcisus[4] his physician was there too – he said, 'Erasmus has made a mistake in the name.' For you had first written Guglielmo, and then struck that through and written Mercurino above it. But I have no doubt that what made him smile was not so much the reason he put forward as pleasure at receiving a letter from you. Then he read what looked to me like two letters, one of them not written in your hand or in an Italian script, and he read that one first;[5] then one written by you or one of your household, and he read it with attention and not superficially. Then he asked me whether you had written him anything else; I said I had nothing else meant for him. 'And yet,' he said, 'this letter seems to hint at something else.' I replied that I knew nothing about that. 'He speaks here,' he said, 'of some approach,[6] but does not explain what he means.' Narcisus asked how you were, and he

* * * * *

1281

[1] Not extant; contemporary with the letter to Gattinara (line 2), which, to judge from its contents (lines 14–16), was contemporary with Ep 1267

[2] Not before 13 May; see n16.

[3] Gattinara (Ep 1150)

[4] The name appears in the list of Charles' retinue at this time; LP III 2288.

[5] The nature of this enclosure is a mystery.

[6] See Ep 1267 n6.

answered that you were suffering from the stone[7] when you wrote. After that, he was silent, and so I took my leave and departed.

The cardinal of Liège[8] had not yet come; he arrived after dark. Next day[9] when I went to see him, I found him in the entrance hall getting ready to go to the emperor, and gave him your letter.[10] He seemed glad to have it, and said he would read it; then he mounted his mule, broke the seal, and began to read. On my return I found our friend Hilarius[11] knocking at my door, and he brought the news that you were well, which rejoiced me not a little. About your coming here he said he knew nothing definite, except that he had no doubt that you would not be away for long. Many want to have you here, even those who have most influence in this court and are thought to be the great judges of ability and research, unless they are taking everyone in and are parading marvellously well counterfeited opinions – which is nothing new in any court and not rare in this one.

Today[12] I shall speak with Coronel,[13] whom I have not yet met since he got here. If I discover anything from him that I think it important for you to be aware of, I will add it to this letter, provided I have not sent it; and if I have, I will write by other hands. Vergara[14] sends you his greetings; he told me that a certain Spaniard now living in Rome, Miranda[15] by name, has written on three or four passages in your annotations on the New Testament. But he does this like one giving counsel with great modesty and respect rather than like a man full of criticisms and objections. Vergara told me the work was dedicated to himself. They said some people here at court had a copy; if I can get one, I will give it to Hilarius here to take to you.

I have spoken with Coronel and, moreover, at length, so you can marvel at my good fortune. First he described to me all the business he is engaged in against Luther's party; he said that was why he could not answer your letter, which he showed me, but he would answer before leaving Bruges.[16] He said he was afraid of your critical eye, and therefore could not work out any means of replying; he is always most ill equipped in both

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[7] See Ep 1267 n5.
[8] See Ep 1268 n9.
[9] Not earlier than 14 May; see n2 above.
[10] Apparently of the same date as those to Vives and Gattinara; see n1 above.
[11] Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10). He was doubtless bringing Epp 1273–6.
[12] 15 May at the earliest; see n9.
[13] Ep 1274
[14] Ep 1277
[15] Carranza (Ep 1277 n8).
[16] The imperial court, of which Coronel was a member, spent 13–22 May at Bruges before proceeding on its way to England via Calais; Gachard II 32.

matter and language, but in language especially. He regards you, if he really thinks as he spoke to me, and he swore he was speaking his mind, as a second Jerome or Augustine, and he says he is devoted to advancing your reputation; he admires what you write, which he declares is absolutely untainted and perfectly Christian, and will defend it just as he would defend Christ's gospel. 'How is it then,' I said, 'that there are men who attack him as though he were a member of Luther's party?' 'There are not,' he said; 'they no longer speak like that, and only stupid people think so.' That was the chief matter of our discourse, and we were parted by supper-time. They do not have Miranda's pamphlet; but they say it is in Brussels. If I can, I will unearth a copy for you from somewhere else.

There came to me today a servant of my lord of Liège, a Spaniard[17] who once worked for me, and he told me that his lordship had handed your letter[18] to a certain Domenico,[19] an Italian whom Aleandro[20] had left here with him, and whom I suspect is a kinsman of Aleandro's. This Domenico after reading the letter said to those who were present: 'Erasmus defends himself though no one accuses him, and complains of Aleandro, though Aleandro has always spoken of him with great respect and has written the pope a letter brim-full of good will towards him.'[21] Mijnheer van Praet[22] is to leave for England today or tomorrow as permanent envoy; and he told me that the bishop of Liège had shown him your letter, and was anxious because you were ill[23] when you wrote. That the chancellor[24] is your keen supporter I have heard even from quite ordinary people about the court.

This letter is put together, as you see, from odd pieces; but as I got to know of everything, I wrote it straight down. But you would rather have a letter like this to tell you about everything than a highly polished one in which there are nothing but elegant commonplaces.

While Hilarius was with me yesterday,[25] that Spaniard who is in the household of my lord of Liège came;[26] and he said in Hilarius' hearing that there is no man under the sun to whom his lordship is more attached than you, and that he always has your works in his hand, reads them constantly and with admiration, and defends you, if anyone attacks you, as he would hearth and altar. He said he had often been present at supper or at dinner when you were mentioned, and my lord had defended you and your reputation and your scholarship against certain Italians in such a way that it was clear that he was very fond of you. Your man Hilarius was most diligent in demanding answers from the people you had written to,[27] but this court has a genius for putting things off and procrastinating.

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[17] Mentioned also in line 74; identity unknown

[18] See n10 above.

[19] Identity unknown

[20] On Aleandro's whereabouts at this time, see Ep 1271:67–71.

[21] No such letter to Pope Adrian is extant.

[22] Louis of Flanders, heer van Praet (d 1555), leading Netherlandish soldier, administrator, and diplomat during the reign of Charles v (Ep 1191). His credentials were dated 14 May at Bruges; LP III 2255. Cf Ep 1286:42–90.

[23] See n7 above.

[24] See n3 above.

[25] 19 May

[26] See nn8, 17 above.

My Augustine,[28] on the arrival of some friends from court, has been laid aside for the moment; but as soon as ever they leave here, I shall run over to Louvain. There I shall very quickly add the finishing touches; for only five books are lacking. Froben has seventeen. I recommend Hilarius[29] to you, the bearer of this; he and I were fellow pupils once in Paris, and I think in any case he is very well recommended to you.

Farewell, from Bruges, 20 May 1522

1282 / To Ennio Filonardi Basel, 21 May 1522

Filonardi (c 1466–1549), bishop of Veroli since 1503, was at this time doing a second tour of duty (1521–6) as papal nuncio in Switzerland. In April 1522 he had moved his headquarters from Zürich, now in the early stages of its Protestant Reformation, over the border to Constance, where he gave Erasmus a cordial reception in September of the same year: Epp 1316:16–17, 1342:474–88.

The letter was first printed in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ENNIO, BISHOP OF VEROLI, GREETING

My Lord Bishop, that bundle of papers, together with your lordship's letter,[1] was faithfully delivered to me, and gave me pleasure on many grounds. In the first place, I learned certain things from them which it was important for me to know. And then this made me see clearly the sincere good will of Matthäus,[2] cardinal of Sion, though from this evidence I do not now learn for the first time of his kindness to me. Above all, I made as it were a new acquisition on the side – your own feelings towards me, who are so

* * * * *

[27] Epp 1273–6

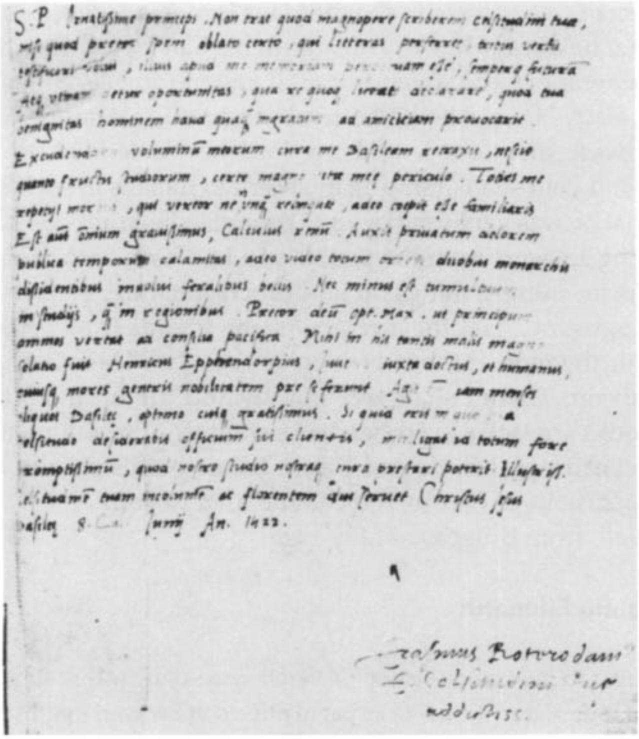
[28] Vives' edition of the *De civitate Dei*; see Ep 1256:108–17, 148–62.

[29] Bertolph left Louvain on 31 May to return to Basel; Ep 1296:14–15.

1282

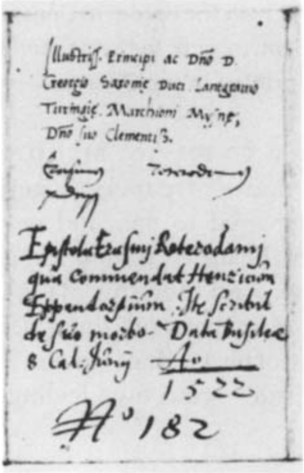
[1] Not extant

[2] Schiner (Ep 1295)



S.P. Illustrissime princeps. Non erat quod magnopere scriberem celsitudini tuae,
nisi quod puerum [illegible] oblato certo, qui literas perferret, [illegible]
testificari volui, illius apud me memoriam perpetuam esse, semperque futuram
atque utinam detur oportunitas, qua re aliqua liceat declarare, quod tua
benignitas hominem haud quaquam merentem ad amicitiam provocarit.
Excudendorum voluminum meorum cura me Basileam retraxit, nescio
quanto fructu studiosorum, certe magno vitae meae periculo. Toties me
repetiit morbus, qui vereor ne vitam eripiat, adeo coepit esse familiaris.
Est autem omnium gravissimus, Calculus renum. Auxit privatum dolorem
publica temporum calamitas, adeo video totum orbem duobus monarchis
dissidentibus maximis feralibus bellis. Nec minus est tumultuum
in studiis, quam in regionibus. Precor deum Opt. Max., ut principum
omnium vertat ad consilia pacifica. Mihi in his tantis malis magno
solatio fuit Henricus Eppendorpius, iuvenis iuxta doctus, et humanus,
cuiusque mores generis nobilitatem prae se ferunt. Aliquot iam menses
egit Basileae, optimo cuique gratissimus. Si quid erit in quo [illegible]
celsitudo desideratura officium sui clientis, intelligat illa totum fore
promptissimum, quod nostro studio nostraque opera praestari poterit. Illustriss.
celsitudinem tuam incolumem ac florentem diu servet Christus Iesus.
Basileae 8. Cal. Iunii An. 1522.

Erasmus Roterodamus
T. Celsitudini tuae
addictiss.



Illustriss. Principi ac Dño D.
Georgio Saxoniae Duci Lantgravio
Turingiae. Marchioni Misnae,
Dño suo Clementiss.

Epistola Erasmi Roterodami
qua commendat Henricum
Eppendorffium. Et scribit
de suo morbo. Data Basileae
8 Cal. Junii ~~Ao~~
1522

No 182

Letter from Erasmus to Duke George of Saxony, Ep 1283
Staatsarchiv Dresden
Only the signature is in Erasmus' own hand.

ready to earn my gratitude, although up to now I have known you only by name. I welcome your offer with both hands, and am sincerely grateful. On my side, to be sure – for it is all I can do – I can promise one thing, a grateful heart that does not forget, such as befits the faithful dependant of a generous patron and benefactor. Farewell.

Basel, 21 May 1522

1283 / To Duke George of Saxony Basel, 25 May 1522

The manuscript of this letter is found in a volume in the Staatsarchiv Dresden entitled 'Dr. Martin Luthers Lehre und andere Sachen, 1522–49' (Loc 10300). The letter was first published by Christian Saxius in *De Henrico Eppendorpio commentarius* (Leipzig 1745). Duke George's reply is Ep 1298.

Duke George of (Albertine) Saxony (1471–1539) was an ardent champion of ecclesiastical reform and an inveterate cataloguer of the *gravamina* of the German nation against Rome. At the same time, however, he was (in contrast to his relatives, the princes of Electoral Saxony) a bitter opponent of Luther and his followers.

Greeting, most excellent Prince. I have no particular reason to write to your Highness except that, having unexpectedly found a reliable person to carry a letter, I wished to assure you in a few words that I do not forget you and never shall. I only wish I may have an opportunity to show in something more than words that the man to whom you so generously offered your friendship is anything but ungrateful. The task of seeing some works of mine through the press has recalled me to Basel, with what profit to learning I know not, but undoubtedly at great peril of my life. I have suffered repeated attacks of an illness[1] which has now become so habitual that I fear it may never leave me; and it is the most serious thing one can have – stone in the kidneys.[2] My personal sufferings are increased by the disastrous times we live in, as I contemplate the whole world plunged by disputes between two rulers into savage wars.[3] Nor is there any less turmoil in the world of learning than between one country and another. May God Almighty turn the hearts of princes towards policies that will bring peace!

1283

[1] See Ep 1256 n2.

[2] See Ep 1267 n5.

[3] Ie, the Hapsburg-Valois wars between Charles v and Francis I, which broke out in 1521 and lasted, off and on, until 1544, only to be revived in the 1550s under Francis' successor, Henry II.

My one comfort in these great troubles is Heinrich Eppendorf,[4] a young man both scholarly and civilized, whose character attests his noble birth.[5] He has been in Basel now for some months, where he is popular with every man of any judgment. If there is anything in which your Highness can use the services of your dependant, please be assured that everything is at your disposal which zeal and pains on my part can achieve. May Christ Jesus long preserve your illustrious Highness in health and wealth.

Basel, 25 May 1522

Your Highness' humble servant, Erasmus of Rotterdam

To the most illustrious Prince George, duke of Saxony, landgrave of Thuringia, margrave of Meissen, most clement lord

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1284 / To Nicolas Bérault — Basel, 25 May 1522

This is the preface to the edition of *De conscribendis epistolis* which Froben published in August 1522. Erasmus wrote the earliest version of the work in Paris before the turn of the century. He revised it several times with the intent of publication but then abandoned the project in 1511. In 1521 an unauthorized version of one of Erasmus' drafts was published by John Siberch at Cambridge. Incited by this bit of piracy, Erasmus produced a new version, so much revised and expanded that it was virtually a new work. For more details see Ep 71 introduction and CWE 25 2–9. There is a critical edition by Jean-Claude Margolin in ASD I-2 157–579 and a translation in CWE 25 12–254.

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[4] Heinrich Eppendorf (d post 1551), a Saxon who studied at Leipzig (BA 1508). Little else is known of him until his visit to Erasmus at Louvain in 1520 (Epp 1122, 1125). Early in 1522, after a period of study at Freiburg paid for by Duke George (Ep 1437), Eppendorf appeared in Basel and attached himself to Erasmus, whom he accompanied on his visit to Botzheim at Constance in September 1522 (Ep 1316 introduction). In December 1522 Erasmus still spoke well of Eppendorf to Duke George (Ep 1325). But when the quarrel between Erasmus and Hutten broke out early in the next year (Epp 1331 n24, 1341A:1020ff), Eppendorf sided with Hutten. Indeed, Erasmus became convinced that Eppendorf had deliberately engineered the breach between him and Hutten and, as a consequence, became involved in a rancorous feud with Eppendorf which lasted until 1531. Erasmus' account of the origins and early stages of the dispute is found in Ep 1437. From 1523 Eppendorf lived at Strasbourg, devoting himself largely to scholarship and winning deserved fame as a translator of the classics into vigorous German prose.

[5] Saxon correspondents eventually informed Erasmus that Eppendorf was, in fact, of humble birth (Allen Epp 1437:83–4, 1551:10–11). Erasmus subsequently lampooned Eppendorf in the colloquy Ἱππεὺς ἄνιππος, *sive Ementita nobilitas*, first printed in the edition of March 1529 (ASD I-3 612–19 / Thompson 424–32).

Nicolas Bérault of Orléans (c 1470–after 1545), whom Erasmus first met in 1506 (Ep 535:42–54), had a distinguished career as teacher and editor. Among his works was an edition of Valla's *Elegantiae* (Paris 1508), and among his pupils was Gaspard de Coligny, the future Huguenot leader and statesman.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO NICOLAS BÉRAULT, GREETING

Once that man Hollonius[1] was no more in the land of the living, dear Bérault, my most learned friend, I supposed I had no one else to fear who might publish to the world the trifles I had written as a young man either to practise my pen or to comply with my friends' wishes, with publication as the last thing I intended. Lo and behold, a second Hollonius has suddenly appeared in England, who has printed a book on the art of letter-writing which I began to write in Paris about thirty years ago[2] for the benefit of a friend of dubious loyalty,[3] whom I wished to please with a present on his own level – like lips, like lettuce, as the proverb has it.[4] The necessary reading and the writing of it together cost me less than three weeks, and so far was I at that time from any intention to make a finished work of it that I gave the original to the man to carry away (for he was making preparations to set out on a long journey) and kept no copy by me. Some time after that, certain friends,[5] who by some chance had lighted on this trifling piece and copied it, obliged me by their importunity to finish the work I had roughed out; for it was not only rough but incomplete and mutilated. So I sat down to it; but as I revised I still did not care for it and rejected it entirely, never suspecting that anyone would be shameless enough to publish my draft notes while I was still alive to protest. But printers, I perceive, have lost all sense of shame. Now that they have discovered that nothing is more eagerly bought than the most trifling rubbish, they leave the classics and authors of repute on one side till further notice, put a bold face on it, and follow the satirist's advice: 'Profit smells sweet, whate'er the source of it.'[6]

And so, though I was so much put out that I now realized for the first

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1284

[1] It was Lambertus Hollonius of Liège (Ep 904) who in 1518 showed Erasmus' manuscript of the *Colloquia* to Beatus Rhenanus, who immediately published it, much to Erasmus' annoyance (see Ep 909 introduction).

[2] Erasmus had arrived in Paris twenty-seven years earlier, in 1495.

[3] Robert Fisher (Epp 62 and 71)

[4] *Adagia* I x 71

[5] Perhaps Adolph of Burgundy, heer van Veere (Ep 93) or Lord Mountjoy (Ep 117), or both

[6] Juvenal *Satires* 14.204–5

time the full force of the feelings that made Horace write 'Long as the night …' (you remember how it goes on),[7] I laid aside my labours of a more or less religious kind, which are now more suitable to a man of my years and much more agreeable to my present state of mind, and wasted some days on the revision of what had already appeared. How great the loss to scholarship, I do not know; to me at least the tedium was very great. To prevent too many repetitions of this, I urge you most seriously, my dear Bérault, to contrive somehow that this young man,[8] who has it seems an excessive devotion to me, should take this book, which you say he has bought at a high price from some knowledgeable dealer, and either destroy it or at the least hand it over to you to be sent on to me, so that I can pronounce on it in complete freedom. As for the printers, what fate can I invoke for them except that they may be given better judgment? In any case, I would gladly warn the young who wish to advance their education to waste as little time as possible on this sort of rubbish.

I perceive, and the sight is torment to me, that this war between the Germans and the French gets more and more bitter every day.[9] What a calamity for the whole of Christendom that the two most powerful monarchs in the world should contend like this in such disastrous conflict! It would be a lesser evil if the question could be decided by single combat between those whose interests are at stake. But what have citizens and country folk done to deserve this, who are robbed of their livelihoods, driven from their homes, dragged off into captivity, slaughtered and torn in pieces? The spirit of princes must be hard as iron if they consider this and let it be, stupid if they do not understand it, idle indeed if they do not think it worth a thought. I had some hopes of our new pontiff,[10] in the first place because he is a theologian, and then because his high character has been obvious all his life; but somehow or other papal authority carries more weight in stirring up war between princes than in bringing it to an end.

But these upheavals do not breach alliances knit together by the Muses, nor can this intercourse between us be broken off by the laws of war. There is no agreement between the emperor's supporters and the French, but comrades in honourable studies agree together very well. Farewell therefore, most civilized of men, and at the same time, given the oppor-

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[7] *Epistles* 1.1.20

[8] Probably one of Bérault's students who had bought a copy of the unauthorized version

[9] The first Hapsburg-Valois war; cf Ep 1283 n3.

[10] Adrian VI (Ep 1304)

tunity, please convey my warmest greetings to Budé,[11] Deloynes,[12] Brie,[13] and all my other friends.

Basel, 25 May 1522

1285 / From Johann von Botzheim Constance, [26 May?] 1522

The manuscript of this letter is in the Rehdiger Collection in the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.38). The letter was first published by Karl Hartfelder in the *Zeitschrift für Geschichte des Oberrheins* 8 (1893) 29.

Johann von Botzheim (c 1480–1535), often called Abstemius (see Ep 1341A n1), was a member of a noble Alsatian family, a doctor of canon law, and since 1512 canon at Constance, where his home was a centre of hospitality for artists and scholars. Erasmus first corresponded with him in 1520 (Ep 1103), visited him at Constance in September 1522 (Ep 1316:12–14), and remained his friend for life. Botzheim elicited from Erasmus the *Catalogus lucubrationum* of January 1523 (Ep 1341A). At first favourably disposed toward the Reformation, Botzheim eventually was repelled by its excesses and, like Erasmus, found both sides hostile to him. In 1527, when the Reformation triumphed in Constance, Botzheim accompanied the cathedral chapter to Überlingen, where he spent the rest of his life.

The month-date in the manuscript (line 71) is impossible: *26 Cal. Junias* (ie, '26 the first of June'). Allen thought that Botzheim might have begun by dating on 26 May and then, because Praus' departure was delayed, have changed to 1 June without erasing the 26.

When you give the length of the journey, my dear Erasmus, most beloved and most learned of teachers, as an excuse for not coming to see us in Constance, I take this in good part, in so far as I recognize on many grounds that Sélestat has snatched you from us not unjustly,[1] although we suffer for it; for apart from other drawbacks we have lost the glory of entertaining Erasmus as our guest. But, given the option, who would not choose the better course? – though all the same I think I have some reason for lodging a protest with you. I came close to transferring myself likewise to Sélestat when I heard your news, so envious was I at the time to see this glory fall to

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11 Guillaume Budé (Ep 1328)

12 Ep 494

13 Germain de Brie (Ep 212:2n) was now canon of Notre Dame de Paris and almoner to Francis I.

1285

1 See the introduction to Ep 1273.

my very dear friends there who are such immoderate gluttons for good literature. I seemed to hear and see my friends with my own eyes all laughing and gesticulating and mutually congratulating themselves with beaming faces on their having snatched from us the triumph of entertaining you. I do indeed owe a great debt to Wimpfeling,[2] my respected teacher; to the two Pauls, Volz[3] and the parish priest;[4] to Beatus Rhenanus,[5] who is triply your friend; to Sapidus,[6] and others of the same kidney – all admirable men that is – I owe them a debt which, given the opportunity, I will repay in such a fashion as to make them all feel, though reluctantly, that I am perpetually devoted to them and their sincere well-wisher.

As for that tyrant who is such a deadly foe to the welfare of Christendom, that stone[7] in the kidneys which is so cruel to you, would that I could drive it far hence to the Caudine Forks[8] at my own risk! As regards that, you would not be far off the mark if you were to parody Hutten's famous fever,[9] just changing the name, and consign it to one of the Fuggers or to some ignorant cardinals or portly abbots. I hate the thought of that sickness that reawakes in you from time to time, until I am beside myself with impatience, so that there is no evil anywhere in the world that I do not wish it from the bottom of my heart for causing such a loss to Christendom by its attacks on you! But Christ with his wonted mercy will see that his purpose in you does not fail.

In any case, if you will not be able to leave the things that are printing for the next fair, this is a reason I highly approve; so far am I from offering you an excuse to abandon them; for I look forward to sharing the results of

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[2] Jakob Wimpfeling (1450–1528) of Sélestat, the distinguished Alsatian humanist (Ep 224), was spending his last years in the city of his birth. In 1517 he founded there the humanist literary society, of which the others mentioned (nn3–6) were members.

[3] Paul Volz (Ep 368), to whom the preface to the 1518 edition of the *Enchiridion* (Ep 858) was addressed

[4] Paul Seidensticker, known as Paulus Constantinus Phyrgio (c 1483–1543) of Sélestat, where he became parish priest and welcome member of the literary society in 1519. Later he went over to the Reformation and in 1535 became professor of the New Testament at Tübingen.

[5] Ep 327

[6] Johannes Sapidus (Ep 323)

[7] See Ep 1267 n5.

[8] Narrow passes near the town of Caudium in Santium (central Italy), famous as the site where the Roman army surrendered to the Samnites in 321 BC

[9] A reference to the dialogue *Febris [Prima]*, 1518 (Böcking IV 29–41), of Ulrich von Hutten (Ep 1331 n24). In the dialogue, Fever is banished to dwell among the representatives of wealth and power: the Fuggers, cardinals, and abbots.

that labour with many others and deriving great profit from it, if I maintain my resolution. I had got a place ready where you could live as you like without a care, nothing splendid, but such that you could easily judge from it how devoted to you I am. I occupy it with greater pleasure and all the more often because it was got ready for my friend Erasmus.

As regards my version of that preface[10] of yours, your warning comes too late, for I have sent it to be printed, not suspecting that any man would have sufficient effrontery and be so unchristian at heart as, out of hatred of Luther, whoever he may be, to persecute the very truth of Christ and the gospel where it is clearer than daylight, simply because Luther had touched on this as well. I do not believe it will pay to sink to such a level of cowardice that, if we have some service we can render to Christians for their salvation (and you are always doing this), we should hold back for fear of any good master doctors you can name, be they Spaniards, Jews, or Coronels.[11] Surely everyone is under a heavier obligation to Christ than to any good master doctor, however enlightened. You detected, rightly enough, that the laconic brevity of your epistle[12] might arouse suspicions that your feelings towards me are somehow growing cool, unless you had indicated what a mountain of work (of which I am well aware) hangs over you. For it is not right to spend on the Botzheims of this world the time that is much more properly reserved for the general good.

I send you, dear Erasmus, better half of my soul, two enthusiasts for liberal studies, as their conversation shows: one Kilian Praus,[13] a Benedictine monk from St Georgenberg[14] in the Inn valley, and the other Simon Minervius,[15] who was previously (I understand) not altogether unknown to you. I myself had never seen them before; but when they reached Constance, they made diligent inquiries in their inn whether there was anyone in the town devoted to Erasmus. They were given my name, and when I heard the story I sent for them. Their courtesy extracted from me something I myself already had in mind, that I would give them a letter to

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[10] Perhaps the letter to the reader, 14 January 1522, printed with the Paraphrase on Matthew (see Ep 1274 n10). A German version of it, *Ein schon Epistel das die Euangelisch ler von jederman sol gelesen vnd verstanden werden*, was printed twice in 1522, but with no indication of the translator's name. Holeczek 121 identifies Botzheim as the most likely translator.

[11] Ep 1274

[12] Not extant

[13] See Ep 1279 n2.

[14] See Ep 1279 introduction.

[15] Simon Schaidenreisser, a kinsman of Praus (see Allen Ep 1449:41).

take to you which they hoped would secure them a welcome; for to see you was, they said, their object in visiting Basel.

Last but not least, I long to hear from you what your next publication will be from Froben's presses. Whatever you have in hand, try hard to take your state of health into account. Farewell; and spare sometimes even a brief word for your devoted Botzheim, who sends you his most affectionate greetings.

From Constance, [26 May?] 1522
Your sincere friend Johann von Botzheim

1286 / From Gerard Bachuus Bruges, 27 May 1522

This letter was first published as Ep 18 in Enthoven from a manuscript in the Rehdiger Collection in the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.14). The manuscript belonged to that portion of the Rehdiger Collection lost in World War II.

Gerard Bachuus (d 1569) was a priest, canon of St Donatian's at Bruges, and 'submonitor' at the chapter school until he became rector in 1523. He had been tutor to Louis of Flanders (lines 42–90) for two years.

I was wondering the other day, O prince of scholars, where our great man Erasmus was, what he was up to, and whether he was well or ill, when I ran into one of my old friends in Bruges, who gave me, I must say, the most splendid news. He told me that a member of the household of my old master Erasmus had arrived from Germany and was in Bruges.[1] I could hardly restrain myself from trotting off there and then and ranging up and down to find the man, longing to ask him whether he had any news and had he not something stupendous to communicate? I tracked him down, and asked him how he left Erasmus. 'Very well indeed,' says he. I rejoice to hear that you are well, and I do not believe (never trust me if I don't speak the truth) that you could have found anyone among your friends at that moment more steeped in delight. What news could give me greater relief and pleasure than to know that all is well with Erasmus? It is a law of friendship that we rejoice in our friends' good fortune and grieve with them when things go wrong. We had a most friendly conversation, as two devotees of the Muses should, and he told me he had brought some things that had not yet reached us, in the way of works not devoid of learning – as one could easily suspect, when

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1286

[1] Hilarius Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10), who arrived in Bruges on about 14 May; see Ep 1281:19–24 and nn9 and 11 in that letter.

I heard they came from your own literary workshop. Everything is beautifully finished, and everything is sound all through, that bears Erasmus' name. Your book of colloquies,[2] he told us, has been printed in an enlarged form with new material. 'What you say gives me great joy,' said I. 'How so?' he asked. 'Nothing,' I replied, 'could give me greater pleasure, for I know what I am talking about, and I hope we shall see old men and young men alike eagerly poring over this book with the same enthusiasm and thumbing it and learning it by heart, for they will get no small profit out of it.' Is there anyone too stupid to see how readable they are, how witty and, on top of that, how instructive? Nor is anyone, I believe, so idle that he would not rather have in its most lucid and most perfect form a thing which touches him so closely and which we use almost every hour. As far as I am concerned, I am confident that the youth of Bruges will emerge from reading your *Colloquia* far better educated than any others, having learned something which will make them a pleasure to every educated man and kindle a zeal for education in their parents. For parents love to hear their children speaking like well-taught, educated people, and they give others the same ambition. Then there is the publication of your paraphrase on Matthew,[3] your useful book on letter-writing,[4] and last but not least some pieces written by you against Luther,[5] but what they are like I have not yet been able to see. I reckon our generation is truly fortunate, in which I see the rebirth and restoration of learning, all through the efforts of this one man of Rotterdam. If only fate would allow us more of the same kind! And so we parted: he went one way to get on with his business, and I another.

So much to give you an idea of our conversation. Now let me give you news of heer van Praet.[6] He is in extremely good health. He is devoted to the Muses, as usual, and pursues them with all his might. Among all the members of the court there is no one who reads as much as he does or shows a more sincere affection and respect for literature and literary men. He enjoys their society, he shows no reluctance to entertain them, he helps them to appointments in the most generous way – all evidence of a really humane person. I would dare swear, believe me, that in the continuous two years that I have been his unworthy tutor, not a day has been so idly spent that there was nothing to show for it in the way of reading or writing, no day so busy that he would not steal an hour or even part of an hour from public

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[2] See Ep 1262.
[3] See Ep 1255.
[4] See Ep 1284.
[5] See Ep 1275 n7.
[6] Louis of Flanders, heer van Praet (Ep 1281 n22).

business. In brief, he is a very keen reader, he admires you beyond anyone, calls you a light of the world, the eye of Germany, the prince of Italians, the glory of Holland and Flanders and other seafaring people, the most learned of theologians, most stylish of orators, and among poets both inspired and expert beyond all others. 'To paint the man in his true colours,' he says, 'he is a man for all seasons, and perfect at all points.' He is entirely devoted to you.

Now let me speak of letters. When he saw the letter you wrote him last year now in print[7] – he had it from Vives before I did – he sent for me to share his delight. I wish you could have seen him beaming from ear to ear, so pleased with himself! You would hardly have recognized the old heer van Praet, he was so beside himself with joy. 'Happy?' he said; 'of course I'm happy, if Erasmus thinks I deserve to be added to the list of his friends. He couldn't give me any present more acceptable. What is worth more than immortality? – which cannot be gotten for gold or jacinth. Erasmus has given me something with this bit of paper which no wealth could buy. How I wish,' he said, 'that he would write to me oftener and more freely! There is nothing I should more appreciate. Nothing would set me up more when I am weary with public business. Unfortunately my position in the world is not grand enough to repay someone like Erasmus adequately. But I am confident of being able to oblige him, and at least I shall do it with a will. I would have recommended him to the emperor, but least of all men does he need recommendation there.' He used to add much else of the same sort; but if I went on to recount that, I fear that the brief letter I intended would turn into an Iliad. And so I do beg you and urge you, dear Erasmus, to be fond of van Praet and to write to him. He is a real friend; he is a man both willing and able to do something for you. He could do something particularly at this moment, for he is being sent to England as envoy, and in sole charge, what's more. There are some people at court who, when he was chosen, were against it, and some who were for giving him a colleague; but Charles will have no one else with him, saying that he is too well equipped for such a post to need a second man. Van Praet was too much for their jealousy and for their intrigues. Nobody has any doubt that he is capable of carrying out and completing everything with great distinction and much to the glory of the emperor; and may God bless the outcome! Let me tell you how the emperor values him; he has imparted to him such secrets, so abstruse, as no member of the court has ever heard; there was no one whom the emperor could trust with such things except him.

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[7] Ep 1191, which had just been published in the *Epiostolae ad diversos*.

My wife is expecting, and may be brought to bed any day now. I hope Lucina[8] will be kind, and she will have a child worthy of both parents.

And so, most generous of friends, you have all our news. One thing please let me get out of you: do not attribute my slowness in writing to laziness, but put it down to my modesty, which is obstinate enough. I was afraid to send you my foul papers, rough and rude as they are, with not a breath about them of Aristophanes' learned lamp.[9] Your kindness was at length too much for me, for you readily give a kindly reception to anything that comes from a friend; your Hilarius was too much for me too, for he persuaded me to take the risk, saying that you were far too kind-hearted to despise anybody. Heer van Praet has told me to send you his greetings. Farewell, best of teachers, and keep your young friend Bachuus at least in the bottom row.

From Bruges, 27 May 1522

Your entirely devoted (for what he is worth) Bachuus

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, most learned of theologians, his much esteemed teacher

1287 / From Guy Morillon Bruges, [c 27 May 1522]

The manuscript of this letter, first published in Enthoven (Ep 15), is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.110). The approximate date is based on the references to the movements of the imperial court (see n1) and to Epp 1273–6, which Bertolph had delivered (Ep 1286 n1).

Guy Morillon of Burgundy (d 1548) first appears as a teacher in Paris, where in 1507–8 he prepared editions of several classical authors for the use of his pupils. By 1515 he was living in Brussels, where he entered Hapsburg service as a client of the chancellor, Jean Le Sauvage (Ep 301:38n). Upon the latter's death (1518), Morillon became imperial secretary. He accompanied Charles to Spain in 1522 and remained there until 1531.

Most honoured lord, your esteemed letter found me on the road, for I am following the court, which I hear has already reached Calais,[1] as fast as I can. I stopped some days in Brussels, getting together what I need for this journey to Spain, and could be of no use to Hilarius[2] because of my absence. Though I do not see what I could have done for him, he has arranged everything with such care, and he is already too well known in the court here to need help from me or anyone else. In fact he can make himself useful to other people (myself included), as can be seen in the dispatch of letters.

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[8] The goddess who brings to light and thus presides over the birth of children

[9] *Adagia* I vii 72

1287

[1] Charles arrived at Calais on 25 May and crossed to Dover the following day; see Ep 1281 n16.

The power of attorney[3] which you suppose to have been sent by our friend Barbier[4] I have been unable to see anywhere; but there is no call for you to be afraid of losing money even if it falls into unauthorized hands, as I do not think it has. For Barbier wrote the other day to his brother[5] and to me how he wished to resign his benefices in favour of that same brother. So far is this from meaning any loss to you, if it comes off, that it will much improve the security for your annuity.[6] In a resignation in this form, Barbier reserves to himself the profits of the benefice and the right of re-entry, so that, should his brother predecease him, it would revert to him again; and if his brother survives him, he is under the obligation of paying the annuity, and would pay it in any case, even were he not so bound. Thus, whether the benefice is resigned or no, the annuity always remains in Barbier's hands. And in fact, if Barbier were to die after his resignation, the annuity survives intact in the person of his brother.

Those letters[7] in which you make it clear that you are not and never have been a supporter of Luther – I long to see them, and will get them from Glapion[8] when I reach the court. All the great men here seem to be your keen supporters. Your writing to them all did a lot of good.

Your annuity will not merely be kept intact in the emperor's hands;[9] it will be paid immediately, if you will first authorize some agent to receive it or will simply write to master Jean Ruffault,[10] the treasurer, who is well disposed to you, as he told me last night. He will remain here with the most illustrious Lady Margaret.[11] It will be possible for you to write to Pieter Gillis[12] or some other person who can collect the annuity for the past year,

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[2] Bertolph had visited the court at Bruges in mid-May and was already on his way back to Basel; see Ep 1281:23–6 and n29 in that letter.

[3] See Epp 1245:33–4, 1254:17–19.

[4] Pierre Barbier (Ep 1294)

[5] Nicolas Barbier, known only from his correspondence with Erasmus (Ep 613)

[6] Ie, Erasmus' pension from the living at Courtrai; see Epp 436, 1094, 1235, 1245.

[7] Epp 1273–6

[8] Ep 1275

[9] See Ep 1273 n3.

[10] Jean Ruffault, seigneur de Neuville, treasurer-general to Charles v and good friend to Erasmus; see Ep 1342:100–2, and Allen Ep 1461:9–10.

[11] Margaret of Austria, aunt of Charles v, regent in the Netherlands

[12] Ep 184

and in the letter you write to the treasurer himself to nominate the man to whom the annuity is to be paid. If I were to stay here I could arrange this admirably. But who can say whether I shall be here or in Spain? – especially as for two months there have been only light winds.

Your request[13] that the Carmelites and the Dominicans may be prohibited from vulgar abuse of you in their sermons may easily be met without an imperial edict, if the cardinal of Liège[14] and the bishop of Cambrai[15] order them to be silent; for this is entirely their responsibility and not the emperor's. You should write about this to his Grace of Liège and the other bishops concerned. I do not doubt that this will be easy to arrange, especially with my lord of Liège, who habitually speaks of you in such glowing terms. Nor do I think he has been aroused by Aleandro,[16] for whom he has a great dislike, as I learn from those in a position to know.

Your letter to Barbier[17] shall be entrusted only to safe hands. I shall speak with More in England. How I wish I had a letter for him from you, and one for the cardinal of York[18] as well! I should much have liked to see you before I leave for Spain. Write often, I beg, to all the great men at court, and tell me if there is anything I can do for you. Farewell.

From the dean's[19] lodging at St Donatian's in Bruges, your lordship's most devoted servant, G. Morillon

To my most honoured lord, Master Erasmus of Rotterdam. In Basel

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1288 / From Andrea Alciati [Noves, c 29 May 1522]

On Alciati, see Ep 1250. This is Alciati's reply to Ep 1278. First printed by Allen, the letter survives in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS G.II.13a.48) in a copy made by Bonifacius Amerbach (Ep 1293). On about 1 May, Amerbach left Basel bound for Avignon to resume his studies under Alciati (AK Ep 899:9ff), carrying Ep 1278 with him (Ep 1278:4–5). Reaching Lyon by 20 May, he learned that Avignon was still not free of the plague that had driven him home the previous year and that, as a consequence, Alciati had retired to Noves, eleven kilometers southeast of Avignon (AK Ep 868). (In his editions of Epp 1278 and 1288 Allen incorrectly identifies Alciati's place of retreat as Châteauneuf de Gadagne; cf AK Ep 780 n2.) Amerbach arrived at

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[13] In Epp 1275:58–60, 1276:8–11

[14] See Ep 1268 n9.

[15] Robert de Croy (Ep 1256 n28)

[16] Ep 1256 n11

[17] See Ep 1302 n1.

[18] Wolsey

[19] Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342)

Noves by 28 May (AK Ep 869), so the date of this letter can be placed at the end of May.

Our friend Amerbach has at last arrived, and brought me your letter. So he made me quite uncertain which gave me greater pleasure: his arrival is a very great joy to me, and anything that comes from you is regarded by me with great veneration, as though it were holy. And so that young man brought me near beatitude on both counts; and yet you recommend him to me, as if he did not already deserve, without any recommendation from anybody, whatever one man can do for another. Perhaps it was your exceptional kindness and sincere and loving nature that made you write as you did; for a friend's sake you do not hesitate to be over-anxious, and never feel you have done enough for the claims of mutual affection. A generous mind indeed and the heart of a true Christian! which all men ought to love and reverence and do all they can to serve, drawing upon it for examples of the true way of life, just as the painters of antiquity used to draw on what they called the canon.[1] Those who do not know how to do this, but instead go out of their way to attack you, do not understand the blessings of our age into which you were born, and suffer from an incurable disease of the judgment.

Suppose Luther's party do threaten books with long teeth to tear you in pieces; it is no cause for distress if you incur the disapproval of those whom all men of sound mind disapprove of. This is still further to your credit. They might perhaps have been able by that first publication[2] of theirs to convince many people (as they convinced me) that they are moved by zeal for Christian piety; but what they have published since, and what they set on foot under this head every day, is against that. I have heard that they have overstepped the limits of decency and Christian moderation and break out into strife and contumely and deadly hatred, sometimes even come to blows, and that contrary to the traditions of the gospel everything is done in the most scandalous fashion. In the same way you ought to stand firm against those who with greater cunning, as it seems to me, accuse you of belonging to the Lutheran faction in order to push you into that camp willy-nilly, which is the most impious plan, I think, that can be conceived. But you will defend yourself with the shield of St Jerome, and will not allow

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1288

[1] Ie, the work of Polycletus; see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 34.8.55.

[2] Perhaps the composite volume of Luther's works published by Froben, without name or place, in October 1518

to be said of you what he said of Tertullian[3] – being so much fired by some people's ill will or abuse that you deviate into a doctrine different from that in which you have lived hitherto in perfect orthodoxy and with the greatest credit.

One thing ought to be a great consolation to you, that, as you well know, none of the ancient Fathers, even the most saintly of them, found his efforts so successful that he had no experience of these quarrelsome gentry; and your situation is in a way better than that in which the ancients found themselves, because in those days there were so many more men of great learning that they could not achieve such an outstanding reputation, and so were an easier target for their enemies and those who lay in wait for them. But you, as the leading light of our generation, stand above all the hazards of ill will, so that, let them bark as loud as they please, they cannot weaken your authority, for such accusations find credence nowhere. Go valiantly on your way then, and continue to support the republic of letters as you always have.

1289 / From Maternus Hatten Speyer, 4 June 1522

The autograph of this letter (=Ep 8 in Förstemann/Günther) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

Maternus Hatten (d 1546), vicar and precentor of the cathedral at Speyer, had once extended hospitality to Erasmus as he travelled to or from Basel (Epp 355, 361). In 1527 Hatten was denounced as a Lutheran and deprived of his post in Speyer, whereupon he moved to Strasbourg and became a canon of St Thomas' church.

Greeting. The lord bishop of Basel,[1] most learned Erasmus, has now sent us a special courier, and wishes my masters to let him have a copy of the decree lately published in our synod at Speyer by our own bishop.[2] The presence of this courier I discovered at the last minute, so I must be brief if I am to tell you what I thought you ought to know.

On the eve of the Ascension[3] there arrived from Rome for one of our

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[3] *De viris illustribus* 53

1289

[1] Christoph von Utenheim (Ep 1332)

[2] Georg Palatinus, bishop from 1513 to 1529

[3] 28 May

Romanists an attack[4] on you published by Diego López Zúñiga,[5] consisting of seven duternions, as they call them.[6] I would have had it copied out and sent it to you, had not I, as a friend of yours, been so far refused access to it. But our dean,[7] who is also your friend, got me the book yesterday evening, and last night with the help of friends who are well disposed to you I had a copy made of the title and prefatory letter and at the same time of the list of chapters and the beginning and end of each. The object of this impostor is to show that you are not only, as he maintains, Luther's supporter but the standard-bearer of Luther's whole party. All this I enclose, and beg you to believe that I have the most friendly feelings in sending it you.

Apart from that, I should be glad to know whether Froben safely received the Hilary[8] and the other things that I sent him by Marcus the Sélestat carrier on 22 May and what is happening about Arnobius.[9] And if it is convenient for him, will he please send me some New Testaments in large and small format. Many people here have read the English king's book[10] with great pleasure; and now Zúñiga's attack on you is being circulated by some men I know (but not many) with equal zeal. May God Almighty long and ever preserve you in good health for the benefit of liberal studies and of us your friends. The dean greets you most warmly. Farewell, most learned Erasmus. I very much hope that Beatus,[11] Froben and his delightful spouse,[12] Hieronymus,[13] and my other friends are flourishing.

Speyer, 4 June 1522

Your most sincere friend Maternus Hatten

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[4] *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates;* see Ep 1260 n45.

[5] Ep 1260 n36

[6] Latin *duternos,* an otherwise unknown word. According to Dr. H.J. de Jonge of the University of Leiden, who has examined the copy in the Rotterdam Municipal Library, Zúñiga's book comprises seven quires of four leaves (or eight pages) each, which makes a total of twenty-eight folios or fifty-six pages. Each quire, moreover, is formed of one sheet folded twice to quarto format. Had the quires consisted of two sheets folded once to folio format, they would have been called 'quaternions,' a familiar term. Thus *duternus* must have been a neologism coined to describe something conceived of as half a quaternion, ie, a quire containing half as many sheets folded into pages half the size.

[7] Thomas Truchsess, d 1523 (Ep 355:50n)

[8] Apparently a manuscript for use in Erasmus' edition (Ep 1334)

[9] See Ep 1304.

[10] See Ep 1275 n25.

[11] Ep 327

[12] Gertrud Lachner, Johann Froben's second wife, whom he married in November 1510

[13] Froben's son by his first wife (1501–63), since 1518 working in his father's firm

To the great scholar in Greek and Latin Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, the vigilant champion of the humanities, his dear friend and teacher. In Basel, Zum Sessel[14]

1290 / From Wolfgang Faber Capito Nürnberg, 5 June 1522

The manuscript of this letter, which was first published in LB, is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.45). On Capito, who was at this time cathedral preacher in Mainz and chief adviser to Cardinal-Archbishop Albert of Brandenburg (Ep 661), see Ep 459.

Some passages of this letter, especially in the second paragraph, were written in Latin that is opaque – full of undefined antecedents and obscure references. The translation faithfully reproduces the bewildering vagueness of the original.

Greetings. Zúñiga's book is likely to please Luther's party. The title-page reads 'The Blasphemies and Impieties of Erasmus of Rotterdam, collected etc by Diego etc.'[1] Over the page is a pompous letter by Zúñiga, in which he assures us that he will prove Erasmus to be the standard-bearer and prime mover of Luther's party. After that, pieces from your *Annotationes* on the New Testament, your notes on Jerome, and your other books, most of them things that suit the public taste and that of anyone who wishes to see a change for the better. Each subject has its own heading, like this: 'The Canonical Hours,' 'The Primacy of St Peter over the other Apostles,' 'Of Ordinances Made by Man,' 'Of the Paris Articles,' and so forth. Then he adds what you wrote, none of which can be taken amiss by any of your opponents with the slightest intelligence, such is the charm of style, the virtuosity of judgment, and the prudence you display in everything.

I congratulate you on the acquisition of such a helpful opponent, whose efforts, intended as they are to damage you, can only recommend you to every man of good will; by which I mean that he almost paints a picture of the sort of man you are, so far as indifferent sight can form an idea of this. You would have felt Luther's opponents by no means to be despised just lately, on account of the letters and the book published by the king of

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[14] Froben's house and printing press, where Erasmus lived until the autumn of 1522; see Ep 1341A:1790 and Allen Ep 1528:54–5.

1290

[1] See Ep 1260 n45. Cf Epp 1289:6–15, 1291:24–35.

England;[2] it is not so very different, they assure me, from your own style and language.[3] Zúñiga has unintentionally calmed them down by producing a unique book, of the sort some friend of yours would have been obliged to put together one day out of what you have written. I am delighted. Nothing pains me more than to see my Erasmus torn to pieces by ill-natured pamphlets which are likely to survive. For your writings are full of happy strokes of genius which just catch the spirit of posterity, and of matter that suits you; if they choose to engage you in this field, they will prove this, not to mention that there will be so many more of them. An age is coming to birth much more blessed than this, which will set equal value on a spirit consistent with itself and a mind trained in the humanities, and will expend its energies not so much in the cult of the Muses as in devotion to Christ. Such is the progress now to be seen everywhere, so far as I can gauge from the present case. And so all of us who value you highly beseech you to consider your peace and quiet by holding aloof from this sorry business, not by tacitly agreeing with the powers that be against your convictions, nor yet by resisting those who spring up after you and in fact grow from the seed-corn that you have harvested. Maybe you could not write otherwise than you did; the manner suggested by your mild character and your mild pen is very different. How therefore will you use the same arguments to reprove the same policy in another man, just because he has acted more unwisely and has run greater risks, paying no attention to his own safety?

They make a great deal here of a pamphlet by Erasmus attacking Luther.[4] I have not seen it yet, nor do I suppose you have boldly done something you would rebuke me for doing. My prince's[5] advice is that you should not reply to Zúñiga, and I urge the same thing. Whichever side you steer towards, you will have to endure hatred from the other one. Some would prefer to see you move towards the better rather than the more successful party; for this, they think, is in a state of flux and uncertain of itself, while the other, growing as it does on its own roots, and founded upon the Rock that is Christ, gains in strength day by day; though the safer course is to remain free and uncommitted and out of bowshot, if we think of ourselves and not of the public weal.

You must take this in good part, for it comes from a straightforward soul who has a great respect for you, and it has been wrung from him by very severe criticisms of you from men of high character, and also by the revolution in progress at this very moment. As far as religion is concerned, either this world of ours will turn Christian, or it will drive the whole idea of Christ off the stage; there is no third course. Farewell in the Lord, and keep up your love for Christ and the public peace, as I know you do, my dear Erasmus.

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[2] The book is Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum* (Ep 1275 n25). The letters referred to may be Henry's two prefaces, without dates, addressed to Leo X and the reader, in the *Assertio.*

[3] See Ep 1275:89–91.

[4] See Ep 1275 n7.

[5] Ie, Archbishop Albert

Nürnburg, 5 June 1522. Your sincere friend Fabricius Capito

To the incomparable Erasmus of Rotterdam, with all the esteem of a son for his father

1291 / From Johannes Caesarius Cologne, 14 July [1522]

This letter was first published by Allen on the basis of the autograph in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS G.I.25.15). The year-date is inferred from the mention of Zúñiga's book and of Buschius' presence in Basel.

On Caesarius, see Ep 374.

Greeting. The man who brings you this letter from me, Erasmus dearest of all my friends, has lain low in my house for several days, for a reason which he himself will be able to make luminously clear,[1] and therefore I need not tell you the whole story at some length, as I had otherwise intended to do. But he will not be able to put as much resentment into his narrative as will, I am quite certain, overwhelm you when he sets out everything as it occurred. Christendom seems to me to have reached such a state that there is simply nothing for it but despair, unless Christ, our only and our final hope, is willing to take pity on us. Everywhere evil confronts us; all the world over, the prospect is darkened by war. Heaven itself has turned against us. And all the time our self-satisfaction, our readiness to live as we always have, continues unimpaired, and we see no need to diverge a hair's breadth from our former habits. Today, it is not merely nation rising against nation; in our very cities citizen and citizen do not agree. New factions constantly arise, not to say persecutions. The laity are hostile to the clergy, and the clergy regard the laity almost with abomination. It is not so much sickening as dangerous to describe the outrages recently inflicted by the citizens here on

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1291

[1] Allen speculates that the bearer may have been Antoine Brugnard (Ep 1318), who left Antwerp c 5 June after two of his friends (Ep 1299 nn23 and 24) had been condemned as heretics in Brussels. Brugnard, however, did not enter Basel but turned off to Montbéliard, arriving there c 22 June. Therefore, if he was the carrier, Erasmus cannot have received the letter promptly.

some of the clergy.[2] It is at present impossible to discern the cause and origin of this evil. And yet, great as is the discord between them, I believe something even worse to be impending in literary circles – not merely between those who pursue such studies on quite different principles, but those too who can be shown to have been equally devoted to the humanities.

I saw a book[3] lately in which a certain Zúñiga, a scholar above the average who is, they tell me, a regular professor in Rome and a Spaniard by birth, has collected a number of passages scattered through your works under some sort of headings, of which the worthless fellow is very proud; he promises that he will shortly publish another book to prove you not merely blasphemous but impious too. When I read the book, in common with everyone else here of any decent education, we guessed at once easily enough what had roused him to the effort of attacking you like this: it was to make you detested by the hierarchy of the church (to which he was moved not so much by personal ill will as, I have little doubt, by the influence of some people in the city of Rome), and meanwhile to ingratiate himself with that hierarchy in hopes of somehow or other securing benefices. But I have no doubts about your courage, or that you are afraid of anything he can do to you; only let the question at issue between you be assessed by reason and not private spite, with judgment and not jealousy. Are these the rewards which such great gifts must earn at last? Perhaps it will prove more profitable to do harm than to care for the public weal, if this is the treatment in store for those who try to do good unto all men, to recall the fallen from their errors, to rebuild that which has fallen, and to restore what is now corrupt.

But I hold forth to you on this more fully maybe than I should. I had my reasons for so doing, though as I write it is already the eleventh hour of the night. Every good wish, and pray convince yourself that I am wholly devoted to you. Farewell again and again.

Cologne, the Saturday after Pentecost
Johannes Caesarius

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[2] The specific 'outrages' referred to here cannot be identified, but the period 1519–25 saw frequent conflicts between citizenry and clergy in Cologne as in many other towns. Contemporary documents (excerpts from which were generously supplied by R.W. Scribner of Clare College, Cambridge) indicate that in Cologne as elsewhere these conflicts were frequently accompanied by violence against the persons and property of the clergy.

[3] Ep 1260 n45. Cf Epp 1289:6–15, 1290:1–13.

Pray give my greetings to Hermannus Buschius[4] and everyone else whom you know to be my acquaintance. 50

To the excellent Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his dear and much respected friend

1292 / To Conradus Goclenius Basel, 16 June 1522

Another letter first published in the *Vita Erasmi* (Ep 1257 introduction). On Goclenius, see Ep 1209.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE DISTINGUISHED GREEK AND LATIN SCHOLAR CONRADUS GOCLENIUS

Thank you for your letter.[1] You have seen Georg[2] by now, I suppose, and have learned the story[3] from him. Tell that non-priest[4] that, if he has decided to leave (which however I do not think right), he must take courage. The first 5 encounter, you know.[5] The man is a great scoundrel. Let him come here next fair-time, and good luck to it. He will not fail to receive a good offer. Yet I would rather the circle[6] did not break up, for many reasons. The end will be different from what they think. About the humanities, I mean. I had written

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[4] Hermannus Buschius (1468–1534), a knight of Westphalia whose real name was Hermann von dem Busche, was a humanist, a poet, and since 1515 a friend of Erasmus, who may have tried to secure him for the Collegium Trilingue at Louvain (Epp 884 introduction). At this time Buschius was in Basel, where he joined the reformers and forsook poetry for theology. In 1523–4 he sided with Hutten against Erasmus (cf Ep 1341A n285), and later (1526–33) taught at the new Protestant University of Marburg.

1292

[1] Not extant; probably dated c 31 May and carried by Hilarius Bertolph (see Ep 1296:12–15)

[2] A messenger who left Basel about 8 June (Ep 1296:14–15) and returned bearing a letter from Vives (Ep 1303:20)

[3] Perhaps some communication about the property that Erasmus had left in Louvain in the care of Neve and Goclenius at the College of the Lily; Epp 1296:16–18, 1355:20–43

[4] Unidentified. Allen's suggestion of Melchior Vianden seems most improbable in the light of Ep 1257:1–5 (unless one or the other of these utterances is not to be taken seriously). Cf Ep 1237:44–7.

[5] Cf Terence *Phormio* 346.

[6] The circle of Louvain scholars described in Ep 1237

about Hoorn.[7] At any rate let him come. Be silent and sensible, sober and sceptical, keep your courage up, and so farewell.[8] 10

Basel, Trinity Monday 1522

1293 / To Bonifacius Amerbach Basel, 24 June 1522

This letter, which was first published in the *Epistolae familiares* (Basel: C.A. Serin 1779), has also been published as AK Ep 873. The manuscript is AN.III.15.1b in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel.

On Bonifacius Amerbach, who was at this time (1520–4) studying law with Alciati (Ep 1250) at Avignon, see Ep 408.

Wishing as I do, dear Bonifacius, that all may go well with you, my mind somehow misgave me as you set off for where you are now.[1] But I dared not fight against God,[2] which means against your wishes and your love for Alciati. Life must come first; better face the risks of a return than stay where you are and perish. The whole world seems poised for some great change; 5 and if this comes about, law will perhaps turn into lawlessness. Above all, dear Bonifacius, have a care of your life and health. Achilles himself found no joy among the shades.[3]

As for me, I begin to recover physically,[4] but have much to distress my mind, and specially a rumour that reached us through the Carthusians that 10 Pieter Gillis had been arrested as a follower of Luther.[5] And lo, here comes my servant[6] with a letter, and nothing sinister has been said. Meanwhile I had dispatched another servant.[7] Oh, this monkish tyranny! How I envy you! Here there is astonishing uproar over the gospel.[8] But of this when we meet. Only please arrange that I may see you. You see how the world is in tumult. Please play the part of a letter from me to Alciati,[9] a man whom I value more than I do anyone.

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[7] Jacobus Ceratinus (Jacob Teyng) of Hoorn; Epp 622:34n, 1237:25–9

[8] This last sentence is in Greek. The admonition to be 'sober and sceptical' is adapted from a fragment of the comic poet Epicharmus much cited by Greek and Roman writers, eg, Polybius (18.40.4) and Cicero (*Ad Atticum* 1.19.8).

1293

[1] Amerbach had just returned to Avignon, whence the plague had driven him the year before; see Ep 1288 introduction.

[2] Acts 5:39

[3] Homer *Odyssey* 2.475–6, 489–91

[4] Cf Epp 1256 n2, 1294:12–13.

[5] The rumour was false, but Gillis (Ep 184) feared the possibility of such action against him; see Epp 1296:4–6, 1318:3–7.

[6] Hilarius Bertolph; see Ep 1292 n1.

[7] Perhaps Georg; see Ep 1292 n2.

[8] On Palm Sunday (13 April) a number of citizens had defiantly eaten pork, thus

I have written this after supper, rather than not write at all, dear Bonifacius. Give my greetings to Basilius,[10] who since you left has never come to see me.

Basel, St John Baptist's Day 1522
Your truly devoted friend Erasmus
To the worthy Bonifacius Amerbach of Basel. In Avignon

1294 / To Pierre Barbier Basel, 25 June 1522

As early as 1501 Pierre Barbier of Arras (d 1551) was a chaplain at the Hapsburg court in the Netherlands. By 1516 he was chaplain and secretary to the chancellor, Jean Le Sauvage (Ep 301:38n), whom he accompanied to Spain in 1517. After the death of the chancellor (1518), Barbier remained in Spain and joined the household of Adrian of Utrecht. When Adrian was elevated to the papacy, Barbier went with him to Italy. The new pope left Saragossa on 11 June 1522 and arrived in Rome on 29 August (Pastor IX 59–66). In his letters (see line 1) Barbier must have announced his imminent departure for Rome, since Erasmus sent the letter to him there (Ep 1302:5–6). All the persons to whom Erasmus sent greetings were in Rome at the time.

The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PIERRE BARBIER, GREETING

The parcels which you sent from Spain, both the books and the letters,[1] have

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provoking an uproar which lasted throughout the summer; see Zw-Br Epp 204 and 206, with Egli's informative notes. Erasmus' *Epistola de esu carnium*, published in August, was a by-product of the controversy; cf Ep 1353. There had also been considerable controversy over Wilhelm Reublin, priest at St Alban's and future Anabaptist leader, whose sermons attacking vigils, masses for the dead, and other Catholic ceremonies, as well as the bishop himself, had drawn audiences of up to four thousand. On 13 June he substituted a Bible for the reliquary in the Corpus Christi procession, for which he was banished on 27 June, 'non sine magno tumultu parochianorum' (AK Ep 877). See also G.H. Williams *The Radical Reformation* (Philadelphia 1962) 88.

[9] To answer Ep 1288

[10] The brother of Bonifacius (d 1535). In a letter dated 14 August, Bonifacius urged Basilius to cultivate Erasmus' friendship more assiduously; AK Ep 882:84–90.

1294

[1] Not extant

arrived safely. As for Matthäus, cardinal of Sion,[2] you must take the place of a letter from me to him. His kindness to me is exceptional, and I feel how much I owe him. If he were my brother, he could hardly be more devoted. I am sorry that I ever thought Zúñiga worth an answer.[3] Now Carranza[4] follows him, no toothless babe in arms. Everyone thinks the *Blasphemiae*[5] ridiculous, and they are all indignant with Zúñiga for publishing things in his anthology which support Luther's case, or so Luther's own people think.

Some time back, they said that the journey to your part of the world was risky, and I was in no state to be fit to travel.[6] In fact, as I write this, I have a serious attack of the stone,[7] although for some days now I have been in fair shape.[8] And I am tied down to the printing of my books[9] and cannot get away before the end of August. Then, if I am even tolerably well, I shall hasten to visit you. Give a thousand greetings to all my friends, to Pace[10] and Fabri[11] and the provost of Wrocław[12] and Herman of Friesland,[13] for whose gifts I have a particularly warm feeling, and Landau the Bavarian.[14] I will write soon[15] to all of them, when I have a more reliable courier and am in better health.

Basel, morrow of St John the Baptist 1522

1295 / To Matthäus Schiner [Basel, c 25 June 1522]

This is a fragment of a letter which, according to Allen, the editors of the *Opus epistolarum* mistook for a postcript to Ep 1410; see his introduction to that letter. Though the letter to Schiner was probably not completed at this time (see Ep 1294:2–3), the fragment may be conjecturally dated as shown, when Schiner's

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[2] See Ep 1295.
[3] The first *Apologia*; Epp 1260 n36 and 1277 n1
[4] Ep 1277 n8
[5] Ep 1260 n45
[6] For a recent, unsuccessful attempt to travel, see Ep 1273 introduction.
[7] See Ep 1267 n5.
[8] Cf Ep 1293:9.
[9] *De conscribendis epistolis* (Ep 1284) and new editions of the *Colloquiorum formulae* (Ep 1262) and the *Parabolae* (Ep 312) were printed by Froben in August 1522. Erasmus' edition of Arnobius' commentary on the Psalms (Ep 1304), to which Erasmus' own commentary on Psalm 2 was appended, followed in September.
[10] See Ep 1342 n85.
[11] See Ep 1260 n22.
[12] Georg Sauermann (Ep 1342 n88)
[13] Haio Herman of Emden in Friesland (Ep 903:14n)
[14] Jakob Ziegler (Ep 1260)
[15] See Ep 1302.

offer of financial support had recently been renewed (Epp 1282:5–7, 1299:49–50).

Matthäus Schiner of Mühlebach (c 1470–September 1522), the son of a Valais peasant, had become bishop of Sion (Sitten) in 1499 and cardinal in 1511. A noted diplomat and champion of Swiss alliance with the papacy against the French, he settled in Rome in 1522 a short time before his death. During his diplomatic journeys he had several meetings with Erasmus, who wrote the paraphrase on St Matthew at his suggestion (Ep 1255:30–1). The paraphrases on the Epistles of St James and St John (Epp 1171 and 1179) were also dedicated to Schiner.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MATTHÄUS, CARDINAL OF SION, GREETING

The five hundred ducats[1] a year which you so generously offer me I feel as though I had already received, and am no less grateful than I should be if they were already mine.

1296 / From Conradus Goclenius Louvain, 26 June [1522]

On the writer, see Ep 1257.

This letter was first published by Allen from MS G2.II.66 fin in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel. Besides the mention of the *Colloquia* and the apology against Lee, the connection with Epp 1292, 1293, and 1303 shows beyond doubt that Erasmus is the addressee. The relationship to those letters also establishes the year-date. The fictitious name in line 36 was probably used as security against hostile interception. The direction to Constance may have served the same purpose, unless Goclenius believed Erasmus to be on a visit to Botzheim at the time (see Ep 1285:1–3).

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1295

[1] The current exchange rates for the Venetian ducat (3.56 grams fine gold) and the Florentine florin (3.54 grams fine gold) were: 6s 8d (80d) gros Flemish in the Low Countries; 41s 6d tournois in France; and 4s 6d (54d) sterling in England. Thus an annuity of 500 ducats was then officially worth about £166 14s gros Flemish, £112 10s sterling, or £1,037 10s tournois. This sum is clearly expressed in terms of the current Venetian gold coin, even though in Venice itself the coin was then called the *zecchino;* the term ducat had come to be reserved for the silver-based money-of-account fixed in value from 1517 at 6 lire 4 soldi Venetian. See Denis Richet 'Le Cours officiel des monnaies étrangères circulant en France au XVIe siècle' *Revue historique* 225 (1961) 377–96; Jean Lafaurie and Pierre Prieur *Les monnaies des rois de France* II, *François Ier à Henri IV* (Paris 1956); Robert Steele ed *Bibliography of Royal Proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart Sovereigns, 1485–1714* (London 1910) I 9; CWE 1 314; and CWE 8 349–50, Tables A, B.

Heaven reward as they deserve those scoundrels who enjoy spreading unpleasant news![1] But may the severest penalties be reserved for those who deliberately invent such things in order to bring torments of grief on all men of good will! It is such men's irresponsible malignity, feeding as it does on the sorrow of others, that has plunged you in this baseless fear for Pieter Gillis.[2] We ought to be quite content, and even regard it as a great triumph, if their rumours are proved false; but none the less it pains me greatly to think how the wickedness of these rascals has plunged you in such consternation as I could discern in your letter.[3] I hope we shall soon see that breed of utter liars have their hands full, with real and not invented misfortunes of their own to report. But this we must leave to fortune. No doubt you have already been relieved to a great extent by Hilarius[4] of the anxiety arising from this false rumour; for as I reckon the days I suppose he must have returned to Basel the day after Georg left you[5] or not much later, since he left Louvain on 31 May. Meanwhile however I have sent you another letter by Pieter, the son of Dirk of Aalst,[6] who left here on 15 June. As to your things,[7] I expected to get my instructions from Georg, but he said you were not minded to make any changes or move to any other quarters[8] unless the outlook is doubtful. And so no efforts have yet been made. Should there be any sudden alarms, or signs of some impending storm or even calamity, I will without fail take steps to see that your position is watertight.

In Louvain all is peace, for those who stir things up[9] have been away for some time; except that some people object very strongly to certain

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1296

[1] See Ep 1293:10–11.

[2] See Ep 1293 n5.

[3] Not extant: probably dated c 8 June and carried by Georg (Ep 1292 n2)

[4] Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10), who doubtless carried Epp 1281, 1286, 1287, and the lost letter from Goclenius mentioned in Ep 1292:1

[5] See n3 above.

[6] Dirk Martens of Aalst (c 1450–1534) spent a long and distinguished career as a printer in Antwerp and Louvain. A devoted friend of Erasmus, he published, among other things, the first edition of the *Enchiridion* (Ep 1341A n174). Of his son Pieter little is known but the name, which appears in the colophons of three books published at his father's press in 1524.

[7] See Ep 1292 n3.

[8] Ie, to quarters other than those in the College of the Lily, where Erasmus' property, including his library (Ep 1355) was stored. Ep 1322:14–15 indicates that a room had been set aside for him at the Collegium Trilingue.

[9] Erasmus' enemies among the friars; Ep 1263 n14

passages in the *Colloquia*,[10] on which I have lately made notes. But I know that you will have no lack of material with which to defend them, and in fact have done so to a great extent in your defence against Lee[11] and his ravings. But men of that sort do not read your answers; they read only what might seem to tell against you, for they hate you worse than they hate dog or snake.[12] But only a few, and those bad hats. 'Yield not to evils; march more boldly on,'[13] as you do already. And so farewell, and all good wishes to the great glory of our age.

Louvain, 26 June

C.G.

My friend Karl[14] tells me to send you his greetings, which he will shortly tender in person.

To master John the tithe-collector, his most respected friend. In Constance

1297 / From Jacobus Piso [Prague, c June 1522?]

The autograph of this letter (=Ep 7 in Förstemann/Günther) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). The manuscript ended abruptly at the bottom of a page. The letter answers one, now lost, which reached Piso via Stanislaus Thurzo (Allen Ep 1662:27–30). This suggests that Erasmus' letter may have been written c 22 November 1521 and enclosed with Epp 1242–3, which were addressed to Thurzo. Piso's reply, the present letter, was lost among his papers for four years (Allen Ep 1662:30ff) and was finally sent, undated, along with Ep 1662 (1 February 1526). The approximate date derives from the account of the dinner at Prague (lines 58–82), which took place shortly before 1 June 1522 (LP III 2299); see also n10.

Jacobus Piso or Borsody (d 1527) was a native of Medgyes in Transylvania. He was the Hungarian ambassador in Rome when he met Erasmus there in 1509. Returning to Hungary in 1516, Piso became tutor to King Louis II of

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[10] Baechem (Ep 1256 n6) had found in the new edition of the *Colloquiorum formulae* (Ep 1262) four passages (on vows, indulgencies, confession, and fasting) that he labelled heretical; see Epp 1299:59–79, 1300:1–47, 1301. In the new edition, c August 1522, Erasmus introduced changes in response to Baechem's denunciation.

[11] The *Apologia qua respondet* (Ep 1341A n225), in which Erasmus responded to Lee's charge (Ep 1061:374–440) that two passages in the *Colloquia* were indecent; see Ferguson *Opuscula* 289–93.

[12] Horace *Epistles* 1.17.30

[13] Virgil *Aeneid* 6.95

[14] Probably Karl Harst (Ep 1215)

Hungary (see n7), for whom he later discharged various diplomatic missions, some of which are referred to in Allen Ep 1662.

It was easy enough, dear Erasmus most learned of men, to discover how to thank my friend Velius[1] forthwith for being the cause of your writing to me; but I can neither find nor invent any words to thank you even now for actually writing with your own hand, especially to the extent that your kindness deserves. Velius perhaps owes some requital to my humble self, mutual affection at least and an equal return of friendship, if nothing else. But my debt to you is too long-standing and too great to be redeemed by any service, to say nothing of requital. As far as I am concerned, however, I shall think myself lucky enough in this respect, and truly happy, if you do not displace me from my old position among your friends; for honestly I have always treasured your friendship so highly, and always shall, that, when I must abandon life itself, I do not feel as though I should ever abandon that place, especially if there is any trusting to the written word one day, when we are all dust and ashes. I am not thinking of my own writings, which are in any case too ill written for me to wish them to survive me, but of the men who of their own accord have testified to you of my unshakeable devotion – and in this class there were not a few who found my opinion of Erasmus not uncongenial. And now my friend Velius is added to their number, from whose conversation you learned, as you say in your letter, that I never vary, and am your most keen and active supporter. In this regard, what I can do for you I do not see, for you enjoy already such a reputation among men of good repute themselves that you need no *curio*[2] to sing your praises, much less a *Piso*.[3] Furthermore, having once known Erasmus in private life 'inwardly and under the skin,'[4] how can I fail to praise him continually and consistently in public, and pay him honour and respect? Let each man make up his own mind on this, all's one to me: for my part I pay him, and him alone, a tribute I would not pay to any other author I have read. I speak of those among the moderns who wish for the true welfare of Christian theology; for those quarrelsome wits who are only at home in the lecture-room have always been my aversion. And how I wish that from my boyhood until now I had never opened a book by anyone except Erasmus!

Yet at this point someone will be found to say that I have read nothing

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1297

[1] See Ep 1280A.

[2] Ie, a herald; see Martial 2 praef.

[3] That is, someone without eloquence; see Cicero *In Pisonem* 1.1.

[4] Persius 3.30

else. I have read very little, I agree, if I reckon the good it has done me; if I count the loss of toil and time, I have read too much. My natural cast of mind always suggested that more self-advertisement has been introduced into the gospel of Christ by some commentators (let me not call them hare-brained purveyors of conjecture) than the pure and simple truth itself would have demanded. What profit I have found in them, I know not; but this one thing I know full well, that I have derived more sauce to the dish from two or three pages of Erasmus than from whole volumes by all those learned doctors in between. I speak of my own taste, and how from time to time it seems diametrically opposed to others, like the one guest in any group of three.[5] In this matter I have always been consistent, I have never blown hot and cold at the same time, though it might have been to my advantage, public and private. And this is now well known everywhere to those with whom I have had to do business; so that if I wish to change, even for some good reason, I could not do it, unless perhaps I wished to be untrue to myself, and nothing could ever be further from me than that. Kings have heard me on this topic, bishops have heard me and princes, and friends above all of my own standing, to whom I have sung the praises of Erasmus the scholar and teacher and no less of Erasmus the man. They plighted their agreement in friendly fashion, not so much with what I said as with the facts, even if men were not wanting here and there who, while agreeing cordially with all the rest, seemed to resent that you were thought to have encouraged Luther (if I may say so) to cause the world so much trouble. That many people bring this up against you, you cannot deny.

But I must not repeat old tales which have long since been told more than once, so I will add one thing at least for its novelty.[6] At dinner lately in Prague the king[7] and queen[8] entertained, as it happened, Andrea da Borgo,[9] the emperor's envoy and a most gifted man, the most illustrious margraves of Brandenburg, Albert, grand master in Prussia, and his brother George,[10] and two magnates from Bohemia. By some chance the conversation turned to Luther, which did not much please my own princes. When one of the margraves saw this, in hopes of pacifying the princes, who support you as a monarch should, he added that to start with Luther had got everything from Erasmus, and that there was a good understanding between them. I was frank, and did not deny that I had indeed heard this, from many people too, but I showed them that the facts were quite different, with plenty of proofs, of which the strongest was what I produced from your letter,[11] which had lately arrived. Some of them none the less maintained their former opinion. Meanwhile I ordered that your letter should be sent for. When it arrived, first of all the queen seized it, eager to recognize your hand, and then the king; but he had got to know it already from the letter you sent me from Siena[12] while I was still in Rome. The letter then flitted everywhere from hand to hand; silence fell while they read it, and the received opinion melted away. On the spot, those who were standing (and there was a circle of courtiers standing round) voted with their feet for my proposal, and those who sat, with their hands. I thought that by this I had richly deserved a victor's crown, or at least a civic one, for at the same moment I had saved a most distinguished citizen who had deserved so well of the republic and throttled more than one obstinate foe, and all that without moving from my position in that engagement.

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[5] Horace *Epistles* 2.2.61–2

[6] Horace *Ars poetica* 16

[7] Louis II of Hungary and Bohemia (b 1506), who had succeeded his father, King Vladislav II, in 1516 and was killed at the battle of Mohács in 1526

[8] Mary of Austria (1505–58), sister of Charles V. After the death of her husband (see preceding note), she became regent of the Netherlands (1530–55).

[9] An Italian in Hapsburg service since 1505. In 1519 he was sent as ambassador to Hungary.

[10] Two sons of Frederick, Margrave of Brandenburg-Ansbach: Albert (1490–1568), last grand master of the Teutonic Order in Prussia, 1512–25; and George (1484–1543), who in 1527 succeeded his brother Casimir in the margraviate. Albert and George were nephews of King Vladislav of Hungary and Bohemia

Perhaps I ramble on too much, especially on so desperately serious a business; for I do not fail to see that there is absolutely no place here for humour, on a topic that threatens a very grave outcome in the near future. Indeed I very greatly fear that any consultations will be far too late, even did Luther himself start now to sing a palinode. They are very, very far astray, in my opinion, all those who limit the outcome of this dreadful business by supposing that, once popular resentment has been vented against religion and the clergy, they will at once refrain from touching the things of this

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(see n7). George had been at the Hungarian court since 1506 and had since 1516 supervised the education of young King Louis. Albert, recently at war with another uncle, Sigismund I of Poland, was in Prague from early May until the end of July 1522 (see the information on his itinerary in Förstemann/Günther 405). Both brothers eventually became important supporters of the Lutheran cause. In 1525 Albert turned Prussia into a secularized, Lutheran territory with himself as the first duke. Starting in 1528, Margrave George and the city council of Nürnberg co-operated in the ecclesiastical visitation of their contiguous territories and in the preparation of a common church order, which went into effect in 1533.

[11] Not extant; see introduction.

[12] Erasmus was apparently in Siena in the spring of 1509; see Epp 216 introduction, and 1206:27–9.

world. In this business the fall of the dice will be quite different: once they have seized this pretext to get arms at last in their hands, we shall hear how they turn against all social order and all government and even (God save the mark) against princes and kings, and plunge the drawn sword into their throats – yes, we shall see this with our own eyes. What can be sacred and abiding, what in the last resort can be even safe, if the people are once released from religion and law? ...

1298 / From Duke George of Saxony Dresden, 9 July 1522

This letter, which is Duke George's reply to Ep 1283, was first published by Allen from a sixteenth-century transcript which Professor Henry de Vocht of Louvain discovered among the papers of Frans van Cranevelt (Ep 1317). De Vocht himself later published the letter as Ep 9 in his *Literae ad Craneveldium*.

GEORGE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD DUKE OF SAXONY,
LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA, AND MARGRAVE OF MEISSEN, TO THE
MOST LEARNED ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GRACE AND FAVOUR

We have received your letter, most learned of men, and it gave us all the more pleasure as we fully learned from it the warmth of your feelings towards us. It also suggested to us that, though at the moment almost no reason occurred to us for writing, yet as we had the opportunity, we should not allow your courier to return without a letter; and there is one subject in particular on which we thought it well to write. There is in general circulation among us here a small book,[1] which in our opinion is noteworthy, attacking the works of Luther and his propositions,[2] under the style and title of his serene Majesty the king of England, our much respected lord and friend, which is a most scholarly and elegant performance and appeals to us almost more than we can put into words. Now, though in view of his royal Highness' outstanding intellect and erudition, which are common knowledge, I have no doubt that it comes from his own workshop, yet many men suggest, and indeed assert, that he had some further help from you.[3] Indeed, if the king's book is compared with your own writing, this can easily be detected from the style. However this may be, we most certainly hope that this book, published as it is under the name of that eminent and learned

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1298

[1] See Ep 1275 n25.

[2] King Henry's book was a reply to Luther's *De captivitate babylonica* of October 1520.

[3] See Ep 1275:89–91.

king, will carry no little weight in opposition to Martin's frivolous propositions, which he has circulated for some years now among the common people.

We also believe sincerely that it would do much good in this regard if you, who brilliantly surpass all other men as a scholar and a fluent speaker and writer, were to descend into this arena. In these last few days two pamphlets by Martin Luther have again appeared in our German vernacular,[4] on the title-page of one of which he has described himself as a preacher, *ecclesiastes*. Both these I send you; in both Martin has, in our opinion, written on the sacraments of our religion and on the leading figures in the church such filth and obscenity and such conceited and unbridled nonsense, that anything more filthy, more obscene, more conceited and unbridled can hardly be imagined.

Arise, most learned Erasmus, and for the love of Christ Jesus turn all the force of your great natural gifts to meet this challenge. Let this be the target for all your energies in speaking and in writing, that at length you may so effectively silence this man with his unbridled conceit that henceforward he may cease to deploy his headstrong and profane presumption with uncontrolled impunity against holy things. In this you will undoubtedly do what is pleasing to Almighty God, far from unprofitable – in fact, a blessing – to Christendom, honourable to yourself, and most welcome of all things to us; and in particular you will win the good will of all those especially who have hopes for the future of Christendom, and will make your name immortal among posterity. Farewell, and give a favourable hearing to this request, and also wish us well, as I know you do.

From our castle in Dresden, on Wednesday the ninth of July in this current year fifteen hundred and twenty-two

George, duke of Saxony etc, with my own hand

1299 / To Joost Lauwereyns — Basel, 14 July 1522

Joost Lauwereyns of Bruges (d 1527) was an able jurist who in 1515 entered the service of Charles of Hapsburg as a member of the Grand Council of Mechelen. In March 1522 he became president of the council. In May, the decisions of the Netherlands Inquisition were made subject to his review as superintendent. It was in that connection that Erasmus wrote the present letter to him, appealing for protection against the attacks of the conservative theologians Nicolaas

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[4] *Von beyder Gestallt des Sacraments zu nehmen vnd ander Newerung* (April 1522), WA X-2 11–41; and *Wider den falsch genannten geystlichen Stand des Babst vnd der Bischoffen* (July 1522), ibidem 105–58.

Baechem and Jacob of Hoogstraten. Lauwereyns seems to have responded coldly to this overture and subsequently sided with anti-Erasmian theologians such as Jacobus Latomus. This caused Erasmus to characterize him as a mortal enemy of good letters (Allen Epp 1717:16–18, 1747:28–30), a harsh judgment not shared by Vives and others who knew him.

The letter was first printed in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOOST, PRESIDENT OF THE GRAND COUNCIL OF MECHELEN, GREETING

I am told, honoured sir, and sincerely rejoice to hear, that supreme authority in the Luther affair has been entrusted to your Excellency, whom I know to be not only a perfect master of the law but a man of spotless character and complete impartiality. For while our efforts must be devoted to laying Luther's faction to rest, we must be careful at the same time not to abandon men of high character, whose labours have done good service to the public cause of learning, to the private spite of certain individuals.

Nicolaas Baechem[1] is universally known in Louvain for his obstinate and vindictive spirit, if he has taken a dislike to someone. Between him and myself a long-standing and bitter hatred arose, even before the world heard of Luther's existence, on account of the learned tongues and the humanities, which he hates even more bitterly. Although he has gone to the length of attacking me so frequently in his sermons and lectures with transparent falsehoods, not refraining even from trumping up accusations of heresy, he yet finds it intolerable that in a piece in my own defence,[2] in which I do not even mention his name,[3] I reject his outrageous charges. And now I hear that at every drinking-party, and at Mechelen in a public sermon, he has branded me as a heretic in common with Luther. This at least is no part of his instructions,[4] either from the emperor or the pope, this way of satisfying the hatred in his heart. Personally, I have never had anything to do with Luther, except that I have always urged him not to go on setting the world by the ears with this sort of pamphlets, for I already prophesied even then what we now see has happened. Both in this country and in yours, both in conversation and by correspondence, I have detached many men from Luther's faction; nor has any single thing more depressed the spirit of

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1299

[1] Ep 1254 n6

[2] The *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem,'* February 1522; see Ep 1341A n269, and cf Ep 1235.

[3] Cf Ep 1341A:940–2. Baechem was, however, sufficiently well described to make his identity perfectly clear; LB IX 434B–C.

[4] As assistant inquisitor

Luther's party than my open declaration in my published works that I support the Roman pontiff and disapprove of Luther's business. Had I supported Luther, as these men affirm, I should not have lacked princes to back me up. Nor is that way of thinking yet so extinct in men's bosoms as they suppose and as I myself would wish. In this country there are more than a hundred thousand[5] men who hate the Roman see, and to a great extent approve of Luther.

Observe now how unfairly I should be treated if, when I have lost the friendship of so many scholars in Germany and aroused against myself all Luther's party, who now attack me in their virulent pamphlets, these men were to abuse their victory, which they owe in great part to me, by making a major assault upon me, and were to denigrate me as a heretic for no better reason than that I like the humanities and do not like the character of Baechem, which almost every honest man dislikes. I have had letters from his Imperial Majesty,[6] from Jean Glapion, from the archbishop of Palermo, the bishop of Palencia,[7] Mercurino[8] the chancellor – letters full of sympathy, urging me to continue in my labours for the cause of learning. I have had letters from other learned men and especially Matthäus, cardinal of Sion,[9] and the cardinal of Mainz,[10] and a great many others, expressing their appreciation and promising me every kind of support and generosity, because in the business of the church I display the spirit which they wished to see. My lord of Sion even offers me five hundred ducats a year and lavish provision for my journey, if I am willing to move to Rome.[11] What could be more monstrous, than that when I have made myself an enemy of Luther's party and am at peace with the world's chief princes, I should be torn in pieces by an individual Carmelite? I lived all those years in Louvain; why did he not charge me with my errors then? In fact Atensis[12] approved all I wrote

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[5] In Epp 1300:90–1 and 1302:113, Erasmus gives a much higher figure.

[6] Ep 1270

[7] The letters of Glapion, Carondelet (Palermo), and Mota (Palencia) were evidently answers to Epp 1275, 1276, and 1273, which must have been delivered early in May (Ep 1281 n11).

[8] Answering the letter mentioned in Ep 1281:2–3

[9] His letter was perhaps an answer to Epp 1248–9.

[10] Ep 1302:74–5 mentions more than one letter, but none from this period survives. For some of the matters raised in those letters, see Epp 1305:12–13, and 1323:22–4. See also Ep 1308:19–24.

[11] See Epp 1295, 1300, 1302, 1305, 1311, 1342:346–52.

[12] Jan Briart (Ep 670), professor of theology at Louvain from 1506 and the university's leading administrator. Despite his conservatism and his discomfort with Erasmus' views, the two had generally cordial relations (but see Ep 1341A:839–57). On his approval of Erasmus' works, see Ep 1225:130.

without exception; then, when at my request he had criticized two or three passages, I replied and gave him satisfaction on them all. And now, in the emperor's absence,[13] they are preparing to misuse his authority to attack me, and thus to satisfy their ancient hatred.

I have lately published a small book of colloquies.[14] Several things in this Baechem loudly proclaims to be heretical.[15] Now in the first place, in these imaginary conversations I impart, not the principles of the faith but the art of self-expression. Nor do they contain anything of the sort, but his hatred makes him think so. I do not condemn indulgences,[16] there or anywhere else; but I have a character who laughs at his friend because, though a worthless fellow, he thought he could get to heaven under the protection of a papal bull.[17] Confession I actually approve; only there is a boy who says he would be satisfied to make his confession to God, if that were acceptable to the leaders of the church; and yet he admits that he confesses to priests as well.[18] As though it were not sufficient for a child to obey the leaders of the church in the confession of his sins, or as though Christ were not one of the leaders of the church; or as though I were certain that it is an article of faith that this form of confession was instituted by Christ! And yet on this subject I have always submitted the verdict of my own mind to the judgment of the church. Someone in the book says he hates fish,[19] and is surprised that prelates have been ready to bind us to eat fish on pain of hell-fire. And yet the man who says this admits that he is an Epicurean.[20] Although this is not clear to me either, whether the pope's state of mind was

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[13] See Ep 1274:12.

[14] See Ep 1262.

[15] See Epp 1296 n10, 1300:1–47, 1301. See also Franz Bierlaire 'Le *Libellus Colloquiorum* de Mars 1522 et Nicolas Baechem, dit *Egmondanus*' in *Scrinium Erasmianum* ed J. Coppens (Leiden: Brill 1969) 2 vols, I 55–81 and, by the same author, *Les Colloques d'Erasme: Réforme des études, réforme des moeurs et réforme de l'église au XVIe siècle* (Paris 1978) 203–12.

[16] Cf Ep 858:430–33. But in private statements, Erasmus was less circumspect; Ep 786:25–6.

[17] In the *De votis temere susceptis*, first published in March 1522; (ASD I-3 149–50 / Thompson 7)

[18] In the *Confabulatio pia*, also new; (ASD I-3 177–8 / Thompson 38–9). But Erasmus' views on this question had already got him into trouble; Epp 1153 n10, 1225 n29.

[19] In a passage newly inserted into the dialogue *Convivium profanum*; ASD I-3 207–8 (March 1522), 227–30 (augmented version in edition of July-August 1522) / Thompson 602–5 (augmented version)

[20] This was in the earlier editions; ASD I-3 198, 202 / Thompson 594, 598.

such that, except in cases of scandal and contempt, he wished to make the eating of fish obligatory upon us on pain of eternal damnation.

I can hardly think that their action against me is in accord with the imperial edict.[21] At any rate, the most recent edict[22] has not reached us here, nor has it ever been exhibited either publicly or in private. I therefore beg you, my distinguished friend, to moderate their hatred and their bitterness with your usual sense of justice. As far as I am concerned, I know what they have in mind: they would like to force me even against my will into Luther's faction, and that is something they will never do. But the point is worth taking whether it would be expedient to drive me to such lengths. It will give the greatest pleasure to Luther's supporters if they commit any outrage against me. If they have any fault to find with me, let them put me on notice first; it may be that I shall reply in a way that more than satisfies them. This is no place for making idle sport of the books of other men. There are countless thousands of men who do not hate their Erasmus, because of the benefit they have derived from my books. And I could set the world by the ears, were I so minded; but I would rather die than be responsible in the future for some new upheaval. Such being my resolve, it will be all the more unfair to act in such a way that I am abandoned with impunity to the implacable hatred of two or three individuals. If courteously treated, I will ensure that no one finds me wanting in a Christian's duty. It has always been my aim to be of use to all men, nor does anyone abhor dissension more than I do.

I am not pleading now for N.B.,[23] for I do not know what he has admitted to. But this I know, that there was no man in Antwerp of more unblemished character, more popular with his fellow-citizens, or of more value to the community in the education of the young. Nor do I express any opinion about his colleague;[24] for of his case, where it concerns Luther, I am

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[21] Ie, the Edict of Worms, May 1520, condemning Luther; see Ep 1313 n7.

[22] Ie, the decree of 29 April 1522 conferring on Frans van der Hulst (Ep 1345 n8) full powers to extirpate heresy in Brabant. In May, these activities were made subject to review by Lauwereyns (see introduction to this letter).

[23] Nicolaas van Broeckhoven of 's Hertogenbosch (Buscoducensis), c 1478–after 1550. A friend to all the humanists active in the Netherlands, Broeckhoven became master of the Latin school in Antwerp c 1520 but got into trouble on account of his religious opinions. In 1521–2 he was imprisoned and forced to abjure his errors; Epp 1302:97–102, 1318:12–16, and Allen Ep 1358:32–3. In 1528 he joined the reformers, settling first in Bremen, then at Wesel, where he became rector of the Latin school. He died as pastor at Blankenburg in the Harz.

[24] Cornelis Schrijver (Cornelius Grapheus) of Aalst, 1482–1558, was a humanist and poet, befriended by most of the great humanists of his time, including

ignorant. But this I know, that he is a good scholar, versed in many languages, and his character is spotless, except that he is a rather unguarded talker. Baechem no doubt treated him with greater severity, having suffered from his attacks in private. It is common knowledge that Hoogstraten[25] and Baechem aim at the extinction of the ancient tongues and the humanities, and seek above all a handle to attack those who teach them. In my opinion they would do better if they were content with their victory and did not arouse further tragic disturbances in this world of ours. The world will bear it somehow, if deprived of Luther; to be deprived of the tongues and the humanities, it will never bear.

But I take up your Excellency's time by my great length; so let me most strongly urge you to use all your wisdom and your sense of justice to control the outbursts of others and, if there is any truth in the rumours that have reached us, not to allow a servant of the public like myself to be abandoned to the hatred of two individuals. Beyond question, this is the wish of our merciful emperor and of our saintly pope, and the general desire of all good men. My best wishes, honoured sir, to your Excellency, and pray add my name to the roll of your dependants.

Basel, 14 July 1522

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Erasmus. By 1520 he had become one of the secretaries of the town of Antwerp. His lively interest in schemes of moderate ecclesiastical reform led, in February 1522, to his arrest on charges of propagating Lutheranism. The price of his release was an abject recantation (Epp 1302:97–102, 1318:8–12, and Allen Ep 1358:31–2). Thereafter carefully avoiding theological questions, he slowly re-established his reputation through literary work and, by 1540, was restored to his town secretaryship.

[25] Jacob of Hoogstraten OP (d 1527) was a Dutchman by birth but, after taking his DD at Cologne in 1504, resided mostly in Germany. From 1510 he was prior of the Dominican convent at Cologne and inquisitor for the archdioceses of Cologne, Mainz, and Trier. His earliest university training had been at Louvain (MA 1485), where he subsequently retained friendly contacts, especially with Baechem. Although a capable theologian, Hoogstraten was a fanatical and intemperate inquisitor. In the Reuchlin affair and other controversies he manifested bitter opposition to humanist scholarship and was indiscriminate in his charges of heresy. Erasmus, whose initial contacts with Hoogstraten had apparently been agreeable (Ep 856:28–34), had no serious quarrel with him until the autumn of 1519, when Hoogstraten denounced Erasmus at Louvain and at the imperial court in Brussels as an accomplice of Luther, using Ep 980 as his evidence. Early in 1520 Erasmus and Hoogstraten met, settled their differences (Ep 1064), and restored tolerably agreeable relations (Ep 1342:670–1). However, Erasmus continued to link Hoogstraten and Baechem as enemies of the humanities (Ep 1330:53ff).

1300 / To Jeroen van der Noot Basel, 14 July 1522

The manuscript of this letter (British Library Add MS 38512 f 2) is in a secretary's hand, with corrections and signature by Erasmus. It was first published by Allen.

Jeroen van der Noot (d 1541), who had studied law at Orléans, was chancellor of Brabant (1515–31) and thus one of Charles V's chief ministers. It is not clear whether Erasmus knew him personally.

Greeting, most honoured sir. I learn from many correspondents that in your part of the world Dr Nicolaas Baechem[1] is attacking me everywhere at social gatherings and in public sermons, and frequently calls me a heretic, and that he is taking steps to secure authority from the emperor's court to burn my book entitled *Colloquia*,[2] on the ground that in it on the subjects of confession, of fasting, and of man-made legislation I think as Luther thinks. Anyone who reads the book will find this very far from the truth; but he so interprets it because he suffers from long-standing hatred of me and of the ancient tongues and the humanities. I have therefore thought it well to forewarn your Highness not to be misled by his calumnies into taking some decision against me which I do not deserve. If you are prepared to comply with his hatred, there will be no end of harsh measures against those who love the humanities. I found it easy to suspect that in the emperor's absence[3] he would start some new campaign.

In the first place, in that book I teach Latin conversation, I do not impart the articles of the faith. Yet not a word in it is contrary to the faith. There is a boy in it who says that he makes his confession every day to God. When asked whether he thinks this sufficient, he replies that he himself would be satisfied, if that were acceptable to the leaders of the church.[4] This Baechem interprets as asserting that confession is a matter of man-made law. It is an established fact that the confession we use is largely a matter of man-made law; it is a fact that our making our confession once a year, and making it to this or that person, stems from the chapter *Omnis utriusque sexus*.[5] Thus we are encouraged to make our confession once a year by the authority of the bishops. The boy therefore does nothing wrong if on the

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1300

[1] See Ep 1254 n6.

[2] See Epp 1262, 1296 n10, and 1299.

[3] See Ep 1274:11.

[4] See Ep 1299 n18.

[5] *Decretales* v.38.12

subject of confession he follows the authority of the episcopate, even if he doubts whether it is part of divine law or no – a point on which, to speak the truth, my own mind is not yet quite clear. Not but what among the leaders of the church Christ has first place, I should suppose. The boy also says that he confesses only those sins that are certainly mortal or very strongly suspected of being so. This, I suppose, no one says is unorthodox.

Fasting is not mentioned in the book;[6] one character merely discusses the eating of fish.[7] Fasting is enjoined upon us by Christ and the apostles. The scrupulous choice of food is condemned in many passages of the gospel text. Yet there is no condemnation in the book of the practice of the church: merely a discussion at table whether it was the intention of the bishops to compel all men without distinction to eat fish under pain of hell-fire, even supposing they had power to do this – I always make an exception of scandal and contempt. As a sensible man, you can see that in this there is nothing that disagrees with the rule of faith. It is not Baechem's business, it is for the pope himself, to explain what he means.

Indulgences are condemned by no one in the book, but one of the characters laughs at his boon companion[8] because, though a man of evil life, he had none the less thought himself secure of heaven under the protection of a papal bull. What is there heretical in this? Is there any divergence from the teaching of the papal bulls, which demand a contrite heart from the man who seeks indulgences?

How much I have done for the general cause of learning, the facts themselves declare. As for Luther's party, I was the very first man to deter them from their presumptuous programme. Had I been willing to support him, that Carmelite[9] of yours would not rule the roost as he now does. I have lost the friendship of innumerable scholars in Germany because I made it clear that I do not think as Luther does. And now Luther's party are resentful, and rave against me in abusive pamphlets. I have estranged more men from Luther than ever Baechem will, whose opinion carries no weight here. And for these services shall I be abandoned to the spite of one individual, who is so beside himself that he cannot attempt to conceal his loss of self-control? The emperor's intentions were good, and I approve them; but I wish his Majesty had committed so perilous a task to someone else. The emperor's proclamation[10] armed them, not against those who are

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[6] Erasmus must have forgotten that fasting is discussed briefly in the *Confabulatio pia*; (ASD I-3 177 / Thompson 38).

[7] See Ep 1299 n19.

[8] See Ep 1299 n17.

[9] Ie, Baechem

[10] See Ep 1299 n22.

devoted to the humanities and the ancient tongues, but against heresies. And yet this is the target against which they will misuse their authority, unless you in your wisdom restrain them. His Imperial Majesty himself wrote to me most kindly.[11] I had a most friendly letter from Dr Jean Glapion, more than once. A letter from the bishop of Palencia. A letter from the lord high chancellor Mercurino. Letters from Rome from, among others, his Eminence the cardinal of Sion, offering me in addition a most generous stipend if I were prepared to betake myself to Rome. A letter in a most friendly spirit from the cardinal of Mainz. They think nothing more damaging to the papal cause than that I should be forced by the private animosity of certain individuals into Luther's faction. These men may try hard to do so, but they will never succeed. My conduct in this business has been such as to give me no fear of Christ's judgment-seat; nor shall I prove untrue to myself. If they have anything against me, let them at least put me on notice. I did on one occasion reply to Atensis[12] on points that had been criticized, and I satisfied him and all the others. They make much of mistakes, I know not what; personally, I have failed so far to find a single one in my books without the assistance of perverse interpretation, which can make the most admirable statements sound very dangerous.

As for this business of Luther, though it is nothing to do with me, you in your wisdom must take precautions to prevent severe steps being taken, and beyond all reason, against men who have done no harm. In the first place, it is not the articles of the faith that are in question but the authority of the Roman pontiff, who has hitherto been given too much power; indulgences, which have hitherto been allowed too much indulgence; and man-made legislation, which has hitherto been given more weight than the gospel. Luther has gone too far, but the passion which roused him to take up this business was not wholly without cause. Furthermore, were this way of thinking confined to the few, it could be restrained by savage measures. As it is, there being more than twenty million[13] people who support Luther in part and hate the pope, savagery against such numbers would be fruitless, especially since no one openly confesses himself a champion of Luther's faction. It is also expedient for the cause itself not to exacerbate too many people. Support for Luther is better left to evaporate than crushed.

But you in your wisdom will see these things more clearly than I. In my own case I ask only that no concessions should be made to Baechem's spite,

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[11] For this and all the other letters listed, see Ep 1299, nn6–10.

[12] See Ep 1299 n12.

[13] Cf Epp 1299:33, 1302:113.

unless I am given notice and can reply. All good wishes to your Excellency, to whom I profess myself entirely devoted.

Basel, 14 July 1522

Erasmus of Rotterdam, your Excellency's most humble servant

To the right honourable Sir Jeroen van der Noot, knight, chancellor of Brabant, my most respected lord. In Brussels

1301 / To the Theologians of Louvain [Basel, c 14 July 1522]

This letter exists in two versions: a shorter one, first published in the *Vita Erasmi* (Ep 1257 introduction); and a much longer one, printed with the first edition (April 1523) of the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A). The shorter version, written in haste on receipt of the news of action impending against him in Louvain, is clearly the earlier one, and probably the one actually sent. It closely resembles Epp 1299 and 1300 and was probably written and dispatched at the same time. The longer version, written after the arrival of more information, may never have been sent to Louvain, Erasmus being content to publish it as his considered defence of the points attacked. Allen published the shorter version, giving the variants from the longer version in notes. Reversing Allen's procedure, we present here the longer text, which is by far the more interesting historically, with the most important variants in the notes. Variants which do not affect the substance of the letter are not noted.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE THEOLOGIANS OF LOUVAIN, HIS DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN IN THE LORD, GREETING

A matter has reached me not only by hearsay but in letters from friends of standing, who tell me precisely the language, the place, and the audience chosen for a slanderous attack on me. The person responsible[1] always runs true to form, and his character and record make it easy to accept as fact what would otherwise have been merely probable. I do not think therefore that I should overlook it, especially in front of you, whose business it was to restrain his unbridled impertinence, if not to please me, at least for the credit of your own faculty.

He puts it about with full use of his lungs that in my book of *Colloquia*[2] there are four passages which are worse than heretical: on the eating of meat and on fasting, on indulgences, and on vows. Although he asserts this emphatically and without restraint, anyone who reads the book with an

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1301

[1] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6)

[2] See Epp 1262, 1296 n10.

open mind will understand that it is not so. For those who have no time to read such trifles, I will expound the point in brief.[3]

But before I begin, there are three points which I would like to make by way of preface. First, there are no grounds in this case for accusing me of contempt of the imperial edict;[4] for I am told that this was published on 6 May 1522, while my book was printed long before that – and in Basel, where even to this day no edict of the emperor has been displayed either in public or in private. Then it must be remembered that in the book I impart, not the doctrines of the faith, but phrases for those who wish to speak Latin, although I bring in some things in passing which contribute to the building of character. Suppose the grammar-master, after setting his boys a theme in French or German, were to teach them to turn into Latin an expression like this: 'May those who imposed these fish-days upon us eat nothing but garlic!' Or this: 'I wish those who compelled free men to accept the necessity of fasting would starve to death!' Or this: 'Men who deal for a high price in the smoky trade of dispensations and indulgences deserve to perish in the smoky flames of the fire!' Or this: 'Those who keep people against their will from marrying really ought to be castrated themselves!' Surely no one would be compelled to defend himself on a charge of heresy if he taught his students to translate such sentiments, wicked though they may be, into good Latin. No one surely would be so unfair as to think this a fair proceeding. Third, I would say one ought to consider particularly what sort of character it is to whom I attribute a particular remark in the dialogue. In that passage I am not portraying a doctor of divinity in the pulpit, but presenting a trivial conversation among elegant young gentlemen. Anyone who would be so unjust as to refuse to let the difference of character tell in my favour would have to hold me responsible in the same work when a certain Augustine,[5] I think his name is, despises the morality of the Stoics and prefers the Epicureans, who chose pleasure as the highest good. The

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[3] These two opening paragraphs correspond to the first paragraph of the shorter version (Allen Ep 1301:1–5): 'A matter has reached me by hearsay only, though it is likely enough, and so I will reply with the sole object for the moment of preventing hasty action based on calumny before my case has been heard. A certain person is putting it about in public that in my new *Colloquia* there are three or four places in which I side with Luther – on confession, that is, and on fasting. That this is not so will be clear to anyone who reads the book with an open mind.'

[4] See Ep 1299 n22. It was published in Antwerp on 6 May.

[5] Augustinus Vincentius Caminadus (Ep 131), who appears as a character in the *Colloquiorum familiarum formulae*. He is the Epicurean hater of fish referred to in Ep 1299:74 and 76.

same man should hold me responsible when a soldier in the book, among many other remarks which are highly appropriate for a man of war, says he is minded to look for a priest with as little sound sense as possible, to whom he may make his confession.[6] I suppose he would also ascribe it to me if, in the dialogue, I had put into the mouth of Arius some words which conflicted with the teachings of the church. If it would be absurd to ascribe these remarks to me, why not consider in other places what kind of character is speaking? Unless perhaps, if I were to introduce a Turk as one of my speakers, they should think fit to attribute to me whatever he might say.

With this by way of preface, I shall now make a few general remarks about the passages with which he found fault. In the first of them a boy of sixteen says that he goes to confession, but only confesses those sins which are certainly capital or are strongly suspected of being so,[7] although the followers of Luther, I am told, teach that it is unnecessary to confess all one's capital sins.[8] So it is clear that what the boy says differs greatly from the point of view which you condemn. A little later, when the same boy is asked whether he is satisfied to make his confession to Christ, he replies that he would be happy in his own mind, if the leaders of the church had been of that same opinion. From this my critic deduces, not by any logical argument, but out of a spiteful desire to stir up trouble, that I am responsible for the view that the practice of confession which we now follow was not instituted by Christ, but by the bishops of the church. This inference might have an air of plausibility, if Christ were not one of the leaders of the church, since, according to the words of Peter,[9] he is the chief of shepherds, and he is described in the Gospels as 'the good shepherd.'[10] So whoever speaks of the leaders of the church does not exclude Christ, but includes him as well as the apostles and the successors of the apostles, just as those who mention the principal parts of the body do not exclude the head. But if this reply seems to some to be somewhat disingenuous, let me concede that the boy was thinking of those who are merely human beings, the princes of the church.

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[6] *Militaria* (1522) ASD I-3 157 / Thompson 15

[7] See Ep 1299 n18.

[8] The shorter version (Allen Ep 1301:30–1) says: '... it is unnecessary to confess all one's mortal sins, but only those which are manifest.' It is not clear why Erasmus here changes the 'mortal sins' (*peccata mortalia*) of the shorter version into 'capital sins' (*crimina capitalia*). At any rate, Luther's point was that we need confess only those sins of which we are aware; see his *Sermo de poenitentia* of 1518 (WA I 322:22–5). Erasmus summarizes Luther's view rather more clearly in Ep 1153:49–52).

[9] 1 Pet 5:4

[10] John 10:14

Is it not sufficient, then, that in making his confession he follows their authority, although he does not know whether bishops were able to institute this on their own authority or whether it was Christ's institution and they handed it on to us? For it is his intention to obey, whatever the channel of transmission. I myself am not entirely clear that the church has laid it down that the present practice of confession is of Christ's instituting. For there are very many arguments suggesting the opposite which I at least cannot resolve. And yet I submit this feeling of mine at every point to the judgment of the church; my ears are open and I will readily follow as soon as I hear her voice loud and clear. Suppose by all means that this had been expressly laid down in the bull of Pope Leo,[11] and that someone either did not know this or did not remember it, it would suffice for the moment, I think, to bow in this matter to the authority of the church with the intention to obey, if that too could be established. Nor is it logical to argue, 'This confession is of human institution; therefore it does not carry the authority of Christ.' The apostles instituted the practices of the church, doubtless in accordance with Christ's teaching. They instituted baptism, they instituted the episcopacy, but in accordance with the authority of Christ. And yet it cannot be denied that much in the practice of confession depends on the legislation of the bishops, namely, that we make our confession once a year, that we do so at Easter, that we make it to a particular priest because not every priest can absolve us from every kind of sin. These examples, I think, make it evident what a blatantly scurrilous attack this is, so far as my views on confession are concerned.

Moreover I say nothing in the work about fasting,[12] though fasting is something which we are encouraged to observe by the Gospels and the apostolic Epistles; rather I am concerned with the scrupulous choice of food, which is specifically rejected by Christ in the gospel and not infrequently condemned in the Pauline Epistles, especially where some Jewish superstition is concerned. Someone will say that this is to accuse the Roman pontiff of enjoining what the Apostle condemns. What the gospel teaches is abundantly clear. It is up to the pope to explain what he has in mind when he demands something which the gospel does not require. Yet no one says in my work – what may possibly be Luther's position – that episcopal constitutions do not render us liable to the charge of sin unless there is an

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[11] The shorter version (Allen Ep 1301:50) says simply 'in a bull.' Presumably the reference here is to the bull *Exsurge domine* against Luther (Ep 1313 n6).

[12] See Ep 1300 n6.

element of contumacy as well.[13] Indeed the speaker in my work concedes that a bishop is able to institute this requirement,[14] only he raises the question whether it was the bishop's intention to lay all men equally under an obligation to abstain from meat, meaning that anyone who did take it would be liable to hell-fire, even if there is no wrong-headed contumacy as well. And the character who says this in the *Colloquia* adds that he has no more liking for fish than for a snake.[15] Moreover there are people who are so constituted that fish is poison to them, just as you will find people who react similarly to wine. If someone who is affected by fish in this way is prevented from having meat or dairy foods, will this not be harsh treatment? Will anyone want to make such a person liable to the punishment of hell if he eats meat in response to the needs of his body?

If any pontifical or episcopal constitution whatever exposes us to the penalty of hell-fire, the position of Christians is hard indeed. If some constitutions bind us and some do not, no one is in a better position to make his purpose clear than the pontiff himself. Such a clarification would be helpful in bringing peace of conscience. But suppose the pope were to lay it down that priests must wear a belt when they appear in public, do you think it likely that he would have intended that anyone who left off his belt because of pain in the kidneys should render himself liable to hell-fire? I do not think so. St Gregory once laid it down that anyone who had had carnal knowledge of his wife during the night should not enter church the following day.[16] If someone had kept quiet about having intercourse and entered the church simply to listen to the preaching of the gospel, do you think he would have risked hell-fire? I cannot imagine that that saintly man was so hard-hearted. If a husband were to eat meat with his ailing wife, who could not otherwise be persuaded to eat and her health made it essential that she take nourishment, surely the pontiff would not intend him for that reason to be at risk of hell-fire? This question is merely raised in the book and no positive statements are made. And certainly before the imperial edict it was permissible to raise questions about these matters.

Furthermore neither in this work nor elsewhere do I simply condemn episcopal indulgences,[17] although too much indulgence has been allowed

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[13] The opinion here attributed to Luther is not found in his writings. In the earlier version (Allen Ep 1301:60–1) Erasmus had asserted more confidently that this is 'what Luther teaches.'

[14] ASD I-3 228 / Thompson 603

[15] ASD I-3 207 / Thompson 602

[16] PL 77 1196 (*Register epistolarum* XI, Ep 64)

[17] See Ep 1299 n16.

them hitherto. All that happens is that someone makes fun of a boon companion because, though in all other respects a worthless fellow (for that is how he is portrayed), he thought all the same that under the protection of a papal bull he would get to heaven.[18] So far am I from thinking this heretical that I believe nothing could serve religion better than to tell the public not to put their trust in papal bulls, unless they take serious steps to change their way of life and amend their corrupt affections.[19]

But, say they, the book makes a mock of vows of pilgrimage. Not at all: the objects of mockery and protest are the men – and there is a large crowd of them – who leave their wives and children at home because they have taken some rash vow in their cups with a few boon companions, and go ranging off to Rome or Compostela or Jerusalem,[20] though in the present state of society I think it more religious to urge men to abstain from such vows entirely rather than encourage them. And these, if you please, are the outrageous heresies which this keen-eyed Lynceus[21] has detected in a child's school-book! I wonder he does not go carefully through my poor little Cato and my *Mimi Publiani*![22] Can anyone fail to see that the origin of all this is some personal vendetta? Though I personally have never done him any harm, except that I have supported the humanities, which he hates worse than death without knowing why. And all the while he prides himself that he too has a weapon with which he can retaliate. If anyone across the dinner-table calls him a fathead or a drunkard, he in his turn will proclaim in his next sermon that the man is a heretic or a forger or a schismatic. I believe, if his cook served up his meat overdone, he would proclaim in his sermon next day that she was suspected of heresy. He knows no shame and no repentance, though the facts have so often shown him up as a flagrant liar.

To begin with, look at the idiotic and crazy nonsense with which he greeted my revision of the New Testament.[23] Then what could be crazier

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[18] See Ep 1299 n17.

[19] At this point the shorter version (Allen Ep 1301:81–4) concludes with the following paragraph: 'So much with reference to the rumour that has reached me; when I have more certain knowledge, I will send a more detailed answer. Now pray consider whether you can tolerate a man who is so distraught with hatred for a fellow Christian that at the dinner-table and in the pulpit he calls Erasmus a heretic on no better grounds than these.'

[20] ASD I-3 147–50 / Thompson 4–7 (*De votis temere susceptis*)

[21] The most keen-sighted of the Argonauts

[22] See Ep 298 introduction.

[23] Among other things, Baechem had proclaimed that the publication of Erasmus' New Testament would inaugurate the reign of Antichrist; Epp 948:141–9, 1196:128–35, 598–613.

than the charges he hurled at Jacques Lefèvre and myself,[24] when it was clear from the facts that he had no idea what I had in common with Lefèvre and what our points of difference were?[25] What could be more brazen than to accuse me in a public lecture of forgery and heresy because I had followed the Greek texts in my translation and written 'We shall not all rise, but we shall be changed?'[26] What could be more insane than the warning he gave in a public sermon in Mechelen that ordinary people should 'beware of the heresy of Luther and Erasmus?'[27] Need I now recall the words he hiccups, rather than utters, after some gross meal, and all the occasions on which his zeal for the Lord's house has had its source in liquor? In Holland the other day he said that in the theology faculty at Louvain I was known as a forger; so I was told by someone who was there and heard him. And when asked why, he replied, 'Because he is constantly revising the New Testament.' What a stupid thing to say! How often did Jerome revise the Psalter – and does that make him a forger? And finally, if the man who through inadvertence or ignorance makes a mistake in translating is a forger, that man was a forger whose translation the church uses at the present day.

And what good does it do him to behave like this? All men laugh at him as a blockhead, shun him as a madman, and shrink from him as a savage whom they cannot deal with. They must inevitably sympathize with a man he attacks so unpleasantly. Yet though no one can stand him, the one man whose good opinion he cannot lose is himself. He seems to think there is an imperial edict to the effect that he can use this virulent and insane language to attack anyone he chooses. That is how this sapient and serious character supports the cause of the orthodox faith. There is no zeal for God in this hurting of the innocent; it is a madness from the devil. On one occasion there was Jewish zeal in Phineas[28] which received high praise; but not so as to set any precedent for Christians. And yet he killed those who were openly heathens; in this man's eyes whatever he hates is Lutheran and heretical. On this footing thin beer, watery wine, and a tasteless stew would be called Lutheran, I suppose; and Greek, a language for which he has a special dislike, no doubt because it was so greatly honoured by the apostles that they wrote in no other, will be called Lutheran; and study of the poets, which he hates too, much preferring potations, will be Lutheran. He proclaims loudly that I undermine his authority, and that in what I write he is made a laughing-stock; but it is he who offers himself as a butt to all educated and intelligent men, and that without ceasing. I reject his calumnies. And if educated men and good men have a low opinion of those who cast calumnies at one who does not deserve them, whose fault shall we say it is, the man who rejects what he ought not to accept or he who casts aspersions out of malice? If anyone were laughed at for asserting that donkeys in Brabant have wings, it would be because he made himself ridiculous. He declares that the whole of Luther is to be found in my books and that they are full of heretical errors everywhere. But when those who read my books find nothing of the sort, they may know no logic but they can easily draw the obvious conclusion. He is authorized by the emperor.[29] Let him therefore do his business in the spirit of the emperor, who would have those who do wrong corrected rather than punished, and at any rate has no wish to see the innocent suffer harm. He entrusted this office to a man he did not know; and when he learns what the man is like, he will without doubt recall the power entrusted to him. Neither the mildest of emperors nor the most upright of popes is minded to see those who by their nightly vigils strive to adorn and improve the body politic abandoned to the resentment of such men as he, even if there has been some human error; much less do they wish to see good men and honourable men treated as strangers and driven into the opposite camp.

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[24] See Ep 1192:56–9, 1196:614–23.

[25] The controversy was over Erasmus' annotation on Hebrews 2:7; see Ep 597:37n.

[26] This accusation elicited from Erasmus the *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem'*; see Ep 1299 n2.

[27] Cf Ep 1302:68–9.

[28] Num 25:7–8

This is more your affair than mine. This man's character casts great discredit on your faculty, for the common folk judge you all by his example; wrongly, I agree, but men are like that. And not a few people are turned away from the study of theology by his brutality. I know that you dislike everything about the man, except for two or three boon companions[30] and one sly fox[31] who uses this man's folly to further his own ambition. But your disapproval will not be generally understood until, since there is no controlling him, you throw him out of your society. This will be most difficult, I well know. Such people are not easily torn away from the delicious smell of meals rich, regular, and free. All the same it bears directly on the honour of your order, which I quite rightly have at heart. Farewell.

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[29] Ie, as assistant inquisitor

[30] According to Ep 1330:53–5, these would be Jacob of Hoogstraten (Ep 1299 n25) and Vincentius Theoderici (Ep 1196).

[31] Probably Jacobus Latomus; see Ep 1330 n17.

1302 / To Pierre Barbier Basel, c 14 July 1522

This letter, first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, is apparently incomplete. It is contemporary with Epp 1299 and 1300, which deal with many of the same topics.

On Barbier, see Ep 1294.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PIERRE BARBIER, GREETING

I wrote you a letter,[1] my incomparable friend, by Morillon, a truly open-hearted friend of mine, which will bring you up to date on the condition in which your poor friend Erasmus finds himself, for I am just about finished, if to be finished means to be face to face with death. I wrote to you the other day[2] (but it was only a short letter) and addressed it to Rome, as it was not certain whether you were likely to be there. I always had a suspicion that Pope Adrian would not go to Rome either before the autumn or without the emperor.

As it is, you ought not to be left unaware of the fate that has finished off a dependant of yours who has hitherto enjoyed your support. There was in the press here, apart from certain other things, my New Testament, revised and enlarged for the third time;[3] and although I had more than once had a cruel reception[4] in Germany, I was like a donkey, which is said to brave the heart of a fire to bring help to its offspring, and was no less anxious to come to the help of my own work, even at the risk of my life; for it would undoubtedly have been ill-treated, had I not been on the spot. When therefore I was offered the company of a large party of soldiers who were returning home at that moment after being discharged by the emperor, I summoned up courage to risk the journey.[5] For in my country retreat at Anderlecht I had recovered my health,[6] or rather, had somehow become young again, to such a degree that I could face anything with a certain

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1302

[1] The letter, mentioned in Ep 1287:46, was evidently sent with Epp 1273–6 to Morillon for delivery to Spain.

[2] Ep 1294

[3] See Ep 1174 n6.

[4] Epp 412:1–10, 867:29–30; cf Ep 1274 n8.

[5] For a discussion of Erasmus' reasons for leaving Louvain to return to Basel, see Ep 1242 introduction. For an attempt at a detailed reconstruction of the journey, based largely on this letter and on Ep 1342, see Allen's introduction to Ep 1242.

[6] Cf Epp 1208:1–2, 1223, 1238:12–15, 1342:25–6.

amount of courage. Thus, as the wisest of men puts it, does a haughty spirit go before a fall.[7]

In this regard it was already most unfortunate that, when a sudden chance presented itself, I had departed without having had a talk with Jean Glapion,[8] whom I have found to be a true and sincere friend. He had wanted to see me, and I was extremely anxious to meet him; but when he called at my house I happened to be away in Antwerp, harvesting my annuity,[9] and in the mean time he followed the emperor, when he abandoned Valenciennes for the Tournai campaign.[10] And so, despairing of an opportunity for an interview, I set out for this place, consoling myself with the hope that once I had finished what I had in hand I might return to my native country before the emperor left it.

Whereupon, in Worms, I fell ill at once from the stink of the stoves.[11] That trouble was relieved by riding, and at Speyer I spent some days recovering as a guest of the dean of the cathedral.[12] Again in Basel, as a result of the smell of a stove, I was seized, not by the phlegm but by the plague pure and simple.[13] This trouble too was overcome by the force of nature. I smelled them a third time, and succumbed to a permanent headache, which was with me for several months. On top of this and even taking its place had come an attack of the stone,[14] which is so far from leaving me that it shows me less mercy every day. There is no end to it, and no time off; one birth follows close on another, and several are in gestation all the time. The process of giving birth often puts me in grave peril of my life, and the torment is such as to give me good reason not to fear death and often to envy sufferers from the plague or shaking fevers. A fortnight ago I almost died in bringing forth. It was an enormous stone; my appetite completely deserted me, and even now cannot be entirely restored. Altogether your friend Erasmus is nothing but skin and bone.

The result of all this was that, though I perceived it to be of the greatest importance for me to be present in Brabant before the emperor's departure, my health none the less made this impossible. I had got as far as Sélestat,[15] which is two days' journey; but a fever contracted from the hot weather forced me to return home; and even that I accomplished with difficulty after staying four days with Beatus Rhenanus to recuperate. I did my business, however, as best I could by letter.[16] I easily guessed that Caracciolo and Aleandro,[17] who had been set against me by false accusations and wicked lies,[18] were campaigning against me in the emperor's court. And there was someone at court who was my bitter enemy; who it is, I have not yet been able to detect, but I suspect he is a Spaniard,[19] and they say he has great influence over the emperor. But the paraphrase on Matthew[20] won me fresh support from the emperor,[21] with the timely help of Glapion, the bishop of Palencia,[22] and other well-wishers. For when the emperor was in England,[23] he was dining with the king, and, my name happening to come up, he spoke of me in most honourable terms[24] and gave my labours high praise. And I know from definite evidence that the king of England is sincerely on my side.[25] Moreover the college of cardinals made it pretty clear that they support me when they published an order[26] forbidding the printing of a pamphlet by Zúñiga of which the title, accurately enough, was *Blasphemies*,[27] and when it was printed secretly they forbade the sale.[28] The cardinal of Sion over and over again[29] offers me five hundred ducats a year from his private means, besides a sum for travelling expenses which is a compliment in itself. The cardinal of Mainz often writes to me in the warmest and at the

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[7] Prov 16:18

[8] Ep 1275

[9] Ep 1273 n4

[10] Charles' siege of Tournai began in September 1521. The city surrendered in November; LP III 1819.

[11] See Ep 1258 n18.

[12] Thomas Truchsess (d 1523); see Ep 355:50n.

[13] See Ep 1256 n2.

[14] See Ep 1267 n5.

[15] See Ep 1273 introduction.

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[16] Epp 1273–6, and doubtless others as well

[17] See Epp 1263:1–2, 1268:74–6, 1305:20–1.

[18] See Ep 1263 n3.

[19] See Ep 1268:77–8.

[20] See Ep 1255.

[21] See Ep 1270; also Epp 1305:21–2, 1314:5–6.

[22] Mota (Ep 1273)

[23] 26 May–6 July 1522; Gachard II 32

[24] Cf Ep 1342:289–92.

[25] Cf Ep 1313:74–92.

[26] Cf Epp 1305:8–9, 1306:27–9, 1312:10–14, 1314:6–7, 1341A:877–80, and LB IX 357A–C (*Apologia ad blasphemias Stunicae*).

[27] Ie, Zúñiga's *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates* in the abridged form in which it was published; Ep 1260 n45

[28] Leo X had forbidden the publication of the original, unabridged version (Ep 1260 n45). The Vatican Archives have yielded no documentary confirmation of Erasmus' repeated assertions (see n26) that the cardinals had placed a special ban first on the publication and then on the sale of the abridged form of Zúñiga's work; ASD IX-2 23 n95. However, it is clear from Zúñiga's own report that the cardinals had prohibited the sale of any of his books in Rome; CWE 8 346:9–13.

[29] See Epp 1282:5–7, 1295, 1299:48–50.

same time most complimentary terms.[30] Nor do I see any danger at all awaiting me, unless it be from a certain number of pseudo-monks.

As for Baechem,[31] I foresaw without difficulty what actually happened, that on the emperor's departure he would begin to play the bully as usual. He began at once to declaim against me, and at Mechelen in a public sermon he warned a large audience to be on their guard against the heresy of Luther and Erasmus. In drinking-parties all over the place he maintained that Erasmus is a worse heretic than Luther, and uttered dire threats of what he would do if I were present. There is another man who attacks me more in secret, but does more harm.[32] You, my dear Barbier, judge him by his original character, which I also found agreeable, when he was still in a junior position; but since he has felt the breeze of fortune in his sails he has become so ambitious that even certain of the theologians cannot stand him, to say nothing of all men of good will. For the religious spirit of the prince I have nothing but the highest praise; but had he been sufficiently well informed about the whole business he would not have entrusted a question of such importance to a fool and a madman like Baechem and to a second colleague very like him,[33] both of whom hate the classical languages and the humanities worse than they would a snake.[34] The Carmelite[35] rages against none so much as my supporters, and those who love good literature, or those by whom he has been injured. He boasts that he is dead to the world; but no one has a keener appetite for revenge.

X,[36] an excellent young man and a good scholar, was treated by him with a tyranny worthy of Phalaris[37] because he once called Baechem a fool. Raving mad as he was, he could not forget this, although in public they went through the farce of a withdrawal. Another man[38] whom he had once let out of his clutches he dragged back again and put in prison – and he one of the best men in Antwerp; I think you know him. What their opinions on Luther may be, I do not know; in my hearing, at least, they have never maintained anything of the sort, but they have a lively dislike for certain Dominicans and Carmelites, who do undoubtedly behave in such a way that every

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[30] No such letters from this period survive. Cf Ep 1299 n10.

[31] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6); see Epp 1299–1301.

[32] Probably Jacobus Latomus; see Ep 1330 n17.

[33] Vincentius Theoderici (Ep 1196)

[34] Horace *Epistles* 1.17.30

[35] Baechem

[36] Cornelis Schrijver (Ep 1299 n24)

[37] Phalaris, ruler of Agrigentum in Sicily (570–554 BC), achieved proverbial fame for cruel tyranny.

[38] Nicolaas van Broeckhoven (Ep 1299 n23)

right-thinking person must detest them. You would agree to the truth of what I say if you were here in person. The Carmelite's fixed opinion is that the movement must be stopped by severity. But while severity may perhaps be used against those who defend Luther openly, we have no one like that here. Dislike of the monks and of the see of Rome has won him some support here among the common people universally and most of the leading men. If this feeling is to be so severely punished, there are here and in my own country twenty million people[39] who share these feelings, and all they need is a leader. Behind an honourable façade this business is all mixed up with a passionate desire to seize what belongs to others and an itch to settle private scores.

1303 / From Juan Luis Vives — Louvain, 14 July 1522

For the source of this letter, which answers one from Erasmus written on 16 June (lines 38–9), see Ep 1256 introduction. Further clues to the contents of Erasmus' letter are found in Ep 1306.

VIVES TO ERASMUS

I have finished at last, thanks be to Christ, the twenty-two books of *De civitate Dei*,[1] and the last five of them, which were still left, I send herewith by the hand of this young man from Cologne,[2] together with a letter of dedication[3] to the king of England, a preface, a note on the ancient commentators, and finally another note on the Gothic ones. These four pieces are to be placed at the beginning of the work, for they form a kind of introduction. As for the preface itself, I have touched on a few points out of the immense field of what we all owe to you;[4] and I only wish I could do this with as much style and scholarship as I can with truth, and with the full force of my own feelings. Please read all this before it is printed, and adjust everything as you think best; please make additions and alterations at your discretion, provided you do not reduce the scope of what I have said, or there will be nothing left. And then, if there are any mistakes, not only in the

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[39] Cf Epp 1299:33 and 1300:90–1.

1303

[1] See Epp 1256:108–17, 1271:3–67, and 1309.

[2] Cf Ep 1306:2.

[3] Dated 7 July 1522, Louvain

[4] Vives praises Erasmus for his work on Jerome, Cyprian, and Augustine and testifies to the great usefulness to him of Erasmus' library. This praise was subsequently withdrawn; see Ep 1309 introduction.

Greek and the orthography but in history or mythology as well, or philosophy or theology, or in the language, I entrust it all to you for correction, being ready to approve any changes you may have made in the work no less than if I had made them myself, and to think you have done me a very great service, for you will have taught me something as well as making my work better. The notes, such as they are, they will no doubt have added in the margins, following the precedent I set in the first two or three books,[5] or their own, for that matter, for they have more experience in these things. It will then not be difficult to put together an index,[6] about which I have already sent you another letter carried by Georg.[7] You must tell me what you wish me to do about the book from Cologne,[8] since it will not be much use to me in future, unless perhaps on a later occasion for a new and revised edition of the same work. I should like to collate it afresh with ancient copies of Augustine; please see that I am sent a full account of your wishes in this regard. The whole question of finance I leave to your judgment and Froben's. You know yourself that I am not greedy for money; and yet one has to live in these very difficult days, and in a region where costs are high and earnings non-existent[9] – such, at least, as are acceptable to a civilized mind. If he sends me anything, let him take care to get it to me by some reliable hand and without delay. I will say no more on this point for fear you may suspect that I have changed my ways, to which you have actually borne witness in print.[10] But mind you think of yourself as well: you know what you lent[11] me when we were here together.

I now come to your letter, which I got I suppose three or four days ago – the one you wrote on Trinity Monday[12] and sent me via Antwerp. For that man of yours,[13] by whom you tell me to send my work, I have not seen, nor has he reached here. Pieter Gillis[14] wrote to Conradus[15] that he would be returning to you by a roundabout route and take longer than I thought in present circumstances it was right to hold things up; nor is Karl,[16] who had said he was going to set out when Georg was here, clear enough when he will go. So Conradus has engaged this man, Johann Andernach,[17] and come to terms with him in the way I expect you will learn from his letter. Personally I had no leisure to look for someone or to make any such arrangements, being extremely busy revising and making a fair copy of the end of my work and the introductions, and in poorish health[18] as well.

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[5] This was done.
[6] No index was provided.
[7] See Ep 1292 n2.
[8] A manuscript of *De civitate Dei* procured by Erasmus at Cologne and said to be written in the hand of St Ludger (d 809); see Allen v 117.
[9] Vives was apparently teaching at a school in Bruges; see Ep 1306:47–9.
[10] See Ep 1082:28–61. Ep 917 was not published until 1529.
[11] Eight gold florins (presumably Rhenish florins). See Allen Ep 1362:3–4.
[12] 16 June
[13] Hilarius Bertolph; see Epp 1281 n29, 1306:5–7.
[14] Ep 184
[15] Probably Conradus Goclenius (Ep 1209)
[16] Probably Karl Harst (Ep 1215)

Of Zúñiga[19] I have heard nothing for some time; I hope you will have plenty of support of the kind your hard work, your ability, your learning, and your integrity deserve. I sent you Carranza's book[20] by Georg; but I see it has reached you already. I will show part of your letter to Dr Joost[21] when I have a chance, as I would have done even if you had not told me to. You tell me to pass on a letter, I do not know which, to Mauritius;[22] but not having seen your man,[23] I have equally seen no letter of yours except the one you wrote me. I have no doubt that Pieter Gillis will have done what you told me to do. Mauritius is away, in England. I send herewith two letters from W. Thale,[24] who is very anxious to know whether you ever got the letter he sent you in Lent.[25] My friends – and yours too – Cranevelt[26] and Laurinus[27] and Fevijn[28] send you their greetings; so do Wouters[29] of the Council of Flanders and my friend Ruffault,[30] who has not lost sight of your business[31] and actually wrote to his father today on the subject. You can give the bearer of this when he returns some volumes of the printed edition, if you think this a good plan, for him to bring them to me. Please give my greetings to all your friends in your part of the world, who by the same token are my friends too,

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[17] Presumably a professional messenger

[18] Cf Ep 1306:9–13.

[19] Ep 1260 n36

[20] See Ep 1277 n8.

[21] Perhaps Joost Vroye of Gavere (Ep 1347); or Joost Lauwereyns (Ep 1299)

[22] Ep 1256 n32

[23] See n13 above.

[24] Ep 1224

[25] 5 March–19 April The letter is not extant.

[26] Ep 1317

[27] Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342)

[28] Ep 1317 n7

[29] Jan Wouters, or Vaulterus (1484–1560), lord of Vinderhoute, near Ghent, and member of the Council of Flanders from 1509 until his death

[30] Jérôme Ruffault, son of the treasurer-general (Ep 1287 n10) and a favourite pupil of Vives

[31] The payment of Erasmus' pension from the emperor; see Ep 1273 n4, and Ep 1306:49–51.

and above all to Froben and his household. Farewell, from Louvain, 14 July 1522.

I had two letters[32] from More a few days ago, in which he said he was in excellent health, heaven be thanked.

1304 / To Adrian VI

Basel, 1 August 1522

This is the preface to the *Commentarii in Psalmos* by Arnobius the Younger, which Erasmus was the first to publish (Basel: Froben, September 1522).

Unaware that there had been two Latin Fathers with the name Arnobius, Erasmus assumed that the author of the manuscript found at Frankenthal (lines 36–41) was Arnobius Afer (died c 330) who, as Jerome reports (lines 121–8), was a rhetorician at Sicca in proconsular Africa. Lactantius was his pupil. The real author, however, was Arnobius Junior, another African who c 450 was a monk in Rome, where he attacked Augustine's doctrine of predestination as heretical.

The new pope was an old friend and fellow-countryman of Erasmus (see lines 12–13 and n2). Born Adriaan Floriszoon of Utrecht in 1459, he became in 1493 professor of theology at Louvain, and in 1507 tutor to the young Prince Charles of Hapsburg. In 1516 he accompanied Charles to Spain, becoming bishop of Tortosa in 1516 and cardinal in 1517. Until his election to the papacy in January 1522, he remained in Spain as Charles' personal representative. Although Adrian was an academic theologian, 'not wholly well disposed to the humanities' (Ep 1311:18–19), he had always been personally well disposed towards Erasmus and his work. As bishop of Tortosa, he supported Erasmus against the Louvain theologians (Allen Ep 1581:484–90) and welcomed his New Testament, urging him to translate the Old Testament as well (Allen Epp 1571:46–8; 1581:291–4, 670–3). On the other hand, Adrian was also an implacable foe of Luther and had in 1519 applauded the Louvain theologians for condemning the Wittenberg reformer (Pastor IX 43). Consequently, Erasmus feared that Zúñiga and others in Rome and elsewhere who regarded him as an accomplice of Luther (see Ep 1260) might succeed in turning Adrian against him (Epp 1310:27–38, 1311:11–19). This fear was finally allayed by the receipt of Ep 1324.

TO OUR HOLY FATHER ADRIAN, SIXTH OF THAT NAME,
ROMAN PONTIFF NEWLY ELECTED, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM,
GREETING

It was not difficult to foresee, most holy Father, with what an ostentatious

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[32] Not extant

outburst of delight Rome was likely to welcome the arrival[1] of one who is by far the most popular of popes, and especially as she has now longed for so many months for his arrival. And so I sought for some way in which, amidst the rejoicing of so many thousands, amidst all those cheering and applauding crowds, amidst the blare of trumpets and the thunder of cannon, you might hear the small voice of a man of lowly estate and one moreover who lives far off, and thus might recognize that your Erasmus was not wholly silent; for just as he listened long ago to your teaching as a theologian and admired you for your nobility of character,[2] so now he is a humble sheep in the flock of which you are the apostolic shepherd. Thus did Zacchaeus,[3] as a man of small stature, seek the support of the sycamore-tree, that he might see Jesus and be seen by him. It would be truer to say, not that I sought a way to do this but that it offered itself unsought. For the goodness of the Lord Jesus (by whose special will it was, as all men are convinced, that you were summoned to your present office) having promised that those who have sought shall find,[4] offered me without my seeking an instrument highly adapted, if I am not mistaken, for the performance of my duty of congratulating you, and that too in no ordinary fashion. For he offered me David's psaltery, making what is, I think, its sweetest music under the fingers of a most skilled performer on that instrument, Arnobius. And if blazing cressets and flaming torches contribute to the splendour of an occasion, this instrument produces not merely animating notes that are sweet in the ears of pious folk; it has its fire as well, it has its sparks of flame, shining with Christ's own fire, which he came to spread over the earth. Such a tribute is far more seemly for one who is truly a theologian and a most upright pope; and so I doubt not that it will be far more welcome to a spirit like yours than the sounding of trumpets, the crack of bronze artillery, or the tumultuous plaudits of popular enthusiasm.

But enough of these tedious riddles; let me give you a plain statement of the facts. About the time when the news that was so welcome to all ears first reached us, that the overwhelming majority of the cardinals had summoned you to that exalted position, the Roman see, I received from an ancient community with an outstanding reputation for religious obser-

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1304

[1] See Ep 1294 introduction.

[2] In 1502–3, when Adrian was professor of theology at the University of Louvain; see Ep 171:15–16, and cf Epp 1311:16–17, 1324:113–15, 1332:70–1, 1338:20–1.

[3] Luke 19:2–4

[4] Matt 7:7; Luke 11:9

vance, which lies between Worms, capital city of the Vangiones, and Speyer, capital of the Nemetae, and is commonly called Frankenthal,[5] a commentary on the Psalms of David bearing at its head the name of Arnobius.[6] The senders had no confidence that it would be welcome, either because they found it thin in texture or because the style was unpolished and the work seemed full of obvious grammatical mistakes. As soon however as I had read two or three pages to get a sample of the work, I found at once that this was not the unskilled utterance of some common scribbler but a most artful artlessness and copious brevity; in the language indeed I found an element that was mean and slovenly, but in the subject-matter all was grand and brilliant. And as I got further into it, my admiration for the work increased, so that I clearly realized what a distinguished treasure had been offered me, only (to use Paul's phrase) in an earthen vessel.[7] I have always been attracted, I confess, by purity of style, even in sacred authors, and repelled by bad Latin; but I only wish we might be blessed with more people who can write bad Latin about the mysteries of Scripture to the same good purpose as this Arnobius can, with so much brilliance, so much learning, such pregnant brevity and (last but not least) such true religious feeling!

But I should be sorry if prejudice arising from the unskilful and in many ways ungrammatical style of the book were to reduce its authority, especially in the eyes of those who habitually measure the wisdom or learning of a writer by his faults of style; and so, before I attempt to speak of the merits of our author and his work, I should like to warn the reader in advance that whatever grammatical errors he may find here arise not from ignorance but intentionally, and should be ascribed not to the man but to the age in which he lived. It is known that Arnobius was a celebrated teacher of rhetoric even before he was initiated into the mysteries of our faith; the fact that Lactantius was his pupil is enough to show how far from inarticulate that man must have been as a teacher; and while still a catechumen he published those notably well written books *Adversus gentes*,[8] following Tertullian's example,[9] as Lactantius in turn followed his.[10] All this shows that it cannot be ascribed to lack of skill that so many mistakes should be found in this present work, especially as they are so obvious that scarcely a Holcot[11] or a Bricot[12] could have made grosser blunders.

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[5] A house of Augustinian canons eleven kilometres south of Worms, founded in 1135

[6] The manuscript Erasmus used is now part of the Palatine collection in the Vatican Library (Pal Lat 160:xc).

[7] 2 Cor 4:7

[8] Seven books, known both as *Adversus gentes* and *Adversus nationes* PL 5 713–1288 / CSEL 4

[9] *Apologeticus adversus gentes pro christianis* PL 1 (Paris 1878) 305–604

[10] *Divinarum institutionum libri septem* PL 6 111–822 / CSEL 19

Yet this is no reason to suspect that our Arnobius is different from the man whose *Adversus gentes* has such a reputation, not least for the elegance of its style. The same man wrote our book, but he did not write it for the same readers. The other work was meant for the educated public and this one for the common people. It is known that in Spain, in Africa, in Gaul, and in the other Roman provinces the general use of Latin was so widespread that a man who preached in Latin would be understood even by cobblers, provided the speaker adapted his language in some small degree to that of the common people. This is made clear by certain sermons of Augustine and by several disputations conducted by him before a public audience, which, as that very fact proves, were not written out by Augustine but taken down by shorthand writers, who included in their written report not only what was said but what was done. If anyone wishes to have these pointed out precisely so that he may test this for himself, let him read Augustine's debate with Maximinus, and compare the opening of the discussion, which was taken down by reporters,[13] with the end of the same work,[14] which he wrote himself after Maximinus had withdrawn from the confrontation. Let him read the two sermons[15] in which he clears up the scandals that were being spread publicly about his clerks; let him read the speech[16] in which Augustine designates the man who is to be his successor in accordance with the popular vote and is to be his representative in less important business; let him read the rhythmical composition against the Donatists,[17] which he

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[11] Robert Holcot OP (d 1349), nominalist theologian who taught at Oxford and Cambridge. He had great interest in classical studies but no classical style. His *Super libros sapientiae* (Haguenau 1494) was extremely popular all over Europe. See Heiko Augustinus Oberman *The Harvest of Medieval Theology* (Cambridge, Mass 1963) passim.

[12] Thomas Bricot, a nominalist theologian trained at the University of Paris (DD 1490), where he taught until his death in 1516. He played a conspicuous role in the proceedings of the faculty of theology, over which he often presided as acting dean in the period 1506–16. He was the author or editor of many works on logic and philosophy, several of which were designed to help students in the faculty of arts master their Aristotle. See A. Renaudet *Préréforme et humanisme à Paris, 1494–1517* (Paris 1916) passim.

[13] *Collatio cum Maximino arianorum episcopo* PL 42 709–42

[14] *Contra Maximinum haereticum arianorum episcopum libri duo* ibidem 743–814

[15] PL 39 1568–81 (sermons 355 and 356)

[16] Letter 213 PL 33 966–8 / CSEL 57 372–9

[17] *Psalmus contra partem Donati* PL 43 23–32 / CSEL 51 3–15

wrote to be sung in public in the language that the public used. Anyone who compares these with what he wrote for educated readers, the *De Trinitate* for example or the *De civitate Dei*, will perceive without difficulty what a difference there was between the language of the educated and that of the unlettered multitude. Even in Rome itself, in the heyday of the language, everyone did not speak as Cicero spoke. Even in those early days the common people took certain liberties as of right, which were condemned by the learned.

It may be asked how Arnobius, a man noted for his eloquence, took it into his head to entrust this commentary to the language of the common people. The first answer is that in the olden time nothing was nearer to the hearts of the people than the Psalms of David: they gave the ploughman something to sing at the plough-tail, the helmsman at his tiller, the sailor at the oar, the digger at his trench, the weaver at his loom, and his wife at her distaff; even children in arms longed to sing some scrap of the Psalms to their nurses before they knew how to talk – so great was the love for this divine music in the old days in every heart – and now the majority even of priests are tired of it. And so Arnobius wished everyone to understand what he perceived that everyone sang. He was moved to do this by Christian charity, which tries to do good to as many people as it can. He thought that to write bad Latin and be useful to the many was better than to win a reputation as a writer from the chosen few. And this popular language was no less intelligible to the educated, so that they too for their part did not lose the benefit of an understanding of the hidden meaning; and he who has his share of that ought not to clamour for the trappings of rhetoric.

I will add a second reason whose existence I suspect, which is in my opinion plausible enough. St Jerome, in a sort of appendix which he added to the chronicle of Eusebius of Caesarea, records that this Arnobius, while still a pagan and teaching rhetoric to the young in the city of Sicca, was driven by a dream to ask for baptism, and when he could not secure what he wanted from the bishops (for they could not be brought to believe that he genuinely wished to adopt a religion which he had attacked hitherto), he wrote elaborate and fully argued books against his original religion, and by giving these as hostages, as it were, made his peace with the true faith.[18] Furthermore, in order to leave no suspicion in the minds of simple Christians, who either hated or suspected the proud, ornate, and artificial style of his earlier life, he divested himself in this commentary of all his noisy rhetoric and brought himself down to the language of the lowest of the

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[18] PL 27 (Paris 1866) 497–8

people, in order to show that he was now wholeheartedly a Christian. For he undertook this task on the instructions of two bishops, Rusticus and Laurentius, as he tells us himself in his preface; and this he describes as an act of obedience, so that we may infer that he speaks as a catechumen or, at most, as a Christian of no long standing. And so anyone who considers for whom Arnobius writes this ought not to regard it as a blunder if he happens on something alien to the habits of more correct writers; it would in fact have been a blunder had he not so written. Suppose a man were to address the common people of Rome in our own day as St Gregory used to address them in the old days, when the popular language was still comparatively unspoiled; or suppose a man to address an audience of Spaniards in language not accepted by the common custom of that country; he would be rewarded with a twofold setback for his pains: first, his audience would not understand him, and secondly, he would give offence and be laughed at as a barbarian.

Thus the example of this author gives no support to those who, though they write for educated readers and in a language which in these days has nothing in common with ordinary people, yet expect actually to earn credit for the way in which the ineptitude of their style is surpassed by the ineptitude of their clever ideas. For the power of eloquence chiefly resides in the choice of subject-matter. Though even now a neat and simple style is not to be despised in a Christian author, provided the absence of rhetoric and claptrap is matched by an absence, on the other side, of meanness. For Arnobius would not commit the same blunders if he were writing today; he would either write in straightforward French, if he were writing for a French public, or in good Latin, if he were writing for educated readers. The language of the apostles, we may be sure, was the kind of thing in which they have given us the New Testament in writing. That was how wagoners and sailors talked then. Such was the language in which the books of the New Testament were first translated into Latin; and if there are blunders in them which nowadays offend an educated ear, they should be ascribed to the customary practice of those distant days rather than to the translators' lack of skill. In those days it was advisable to write like that, because one was writing for the common people; and in the same way it is folly now to parade one's blunders, which are no help to those who are not educated and a stumbling-block to those who are, and which obscure the meaning and reduce the influence the writer can exert.

In any case, since it is well known that popular usage corrupted the purity of the old Roman tongue, it is likely that different nations and different periods of time will have corrupted it in different ways. We find at least two things in this commentary which on the evidence of St Augustine were as a rule wrongly pronounced in the popular speech of his own day. In his commentary on Psalm 138 Arnobius more than once writes *ossum* for *os* (the word which makes *ossis* in the genitive and *ossa* in the plural) and *floriet* for *florebit*, and does this in such a way that it is pretty clearly not an accident; and when he used the word *os*, he added '*ossum*, that is' as though explaining to the people what he meant. St Augustine mentions both words in the book he called *De doctrina christiana*. In chapter 3 of the third book, where he is discussing words whose meaning is ambiguous, he says: 'Where the text reads *Non est absconditum a te os meum, quod fecisti in abscondito*,[19] it is not clear as one reads whether *os* should be pronounced with a short vowel or a long one. If one shortens it, it comes from the word of which the plural is *ossa*; if one lengthens it, one understands it as the singular of the word the plural of which is *ora*. But such questions are settled by inspection of the text in the underlying language; for in the Greek the word is not *stoma* but *osteon*. In such cases the habits of popular speech are often a better guide to the meaning than the accurate language of the educated. I would rather they said *Non est absconditum abs te ossum meum*, though it involves a blunder, than that the words should be less well understood because they are more like Latin.' Again, in chapter 13 of the second book, when discussing faults of language he says: 'Then there is that phrase which you hear from congregations when they chant the Psalms and which it is no longer possible to suppress: *Super ipsum floriet sanctificatio mea*.[20] It means not one scrap less; and yet a more educated person who hears it would gladly have it corrected to make them say *florebit* and not *floriet*, nor is there any obstacle to the correction except the habits of people when they chant.' From these remarks we can infer that this commentary was written for Africans, and that it was written in those very early times.

It may perhaps be a good plan to point out a few other barbarisms, so that the reader, being forewarned, may take less offence when he comes across them, and may not alter them on the spot under the impression that the text has been corrupted by scribes. It is not rare for Arnobius to use *poenitemini* as a deponent. Often too he puts *tribulantes* for those who suffer tribulation, not for those who inflict it; and in the same way *confundentes* for those who are confounded with shame, as though *tribulari* and *confundi* were deponent verbs and not passives. He constantly writes *hoc flos* and *hoc ros* as neuters on the analogy of *os, oris*. He constructs the verbs *careo* and *utor* with the accusative. He inflects *manna* with *mannae* genitive, as we do *Anna*,

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[19] Ps 139 (Vulg 138):15
[20] Ps 132 (Vulg 131):18

Annae. Following the precedent of Greek he often uses a nominative absolute instead of an ablative, for instance in the commentaries on Psalms 114 and 84. Sometimes he adds a case appropriate not to the words he uses but to the verb which his phrase replaces, for example *memor esto apostolos* for *memento apostolos* in Psalm 88. In one passage he wrote *adtropare* for *per tropologiam applicare*, the former being at that date, I suppose, the current rather than the correct usage. The word *paratura*, which is a speciality of Tertullian, you will sometimes find in him too; for though Tertullian was earlier than Arnobius, they were of the same race. Some things not unlike these are to be found in Augustine's books, especially in those which were addressed to the public: *subdiacones* and *diacones*, for instance, and *baptismum* as a neuter.

I thought these points worth mention, to discourage anyone from underrating a work of scholarly as well as religious value on account of these faults of language and others like them, though they were so far from seeming faults to the contemporaries for whom he wrote that he himself would have been thought illiterate had he written otherwise. By changes of phrasing and a few additions I could without much effort have transferred the credit for the whole work to myself. But, for one thing, to steal someone else's reputation has always been utterly foreign to my character; besides which, Arnobius strikes me as a man who ought not to be deprived of his meed of praise among posterity.

We have lost the polemical work *Adversus gentes*,[21] which is well spoken of. Let this at least be the surviving memorial to a gifted man, of whom Jerome so often speaks highly. Yet this particular work is not mentioned by Jerome in his catalogue of illustrious authors, the reason perhaps being that, as the book was designed for a popular audience, its circulation was confined to Africa, or it was too well known and too universally read to be thought by Jerome to need mentioning. Thus it is that excessive popularity has caused some things to be forgotten. This is no doubt the reason why we are now deprived of the titles of the works of Origen; and a similar mischance would have left us in ignorance of the books of Tertullian, had not providence relented towards the cause of learning and lately brought to light some part of them.[22]

I will put forward a further indication from which, over and above inferences from the style, one can gather that the writer is early. He refers, as occasion offers, to several heretics, Manichaeus, Novatian, and Arius, but to none later than the age of Arnobius.[23] For the rise of the Arian heresy clearly belongs to that period, since he flourished under the emperor Diocletian about the year 329 of the Christian era. Apart from that, he mentions neither Donatists nor Pelagians, though both those pestilential sects arose in Africa; the first of the two clearly took its rise after our author's death or in his extreme old age, and the other is known to have come into existence in the age of Augustine.[24] And yet our Arnobius in two or three places discusses the freedom of the will, and he could not have failed to mention Pelagius had Pelagius preceded him.[25]

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[21] Arnobius Afer's *Adversus gentes* (see n8 above) was first published in Rome in 1542–3 by the Vatican librarian, Faustus Sabaeus of Brescia.

[22] In Beatus Rhenanus' edition of 1521, published by Froben at Basel

It has been shown then that the only features which might give offence contain no element that should offend anyone; the author is warmly recommended to us by no less an authority than Jerome, and the work itself by its very early date; now for a few words of explanation of the qualities in this volume which have so much filled me with admiration. In the first place, it is generally agreed that among all the books of Holy Scripture none is full of such recondite mysteries as the book of Psalms, and no other book is wrapped in such obscurity of words and meaning. On such a subject to be at once both brief and clear – and our author is both to a surprising degree – seems to me the mark of a man with peculiar powers of expression, and equally with a thorough understanding of the subject-matter. No one can explain briefly what he does not understand; no one could expound such obscure material so lucidly except a man very well versed in all the arts of communication. Nowhere does he distract his reader with roundabout prefatory matter and digressions, but all the time as a master of his craft he 'keeps up his speed, and in the heart of things / Plunges his reader as though he knew it all,' as Horace says[26] in admiration of Homer. At no point does he cite the testimony of Holy Writ for mere display; but his whole style is skilfully put together like inlay or mosaic from scriptural elements, and often he weaves together several verses of the psalm he is expounding with such skill that the addition of a few words enables him to throw light even on what he does not expound, and sets them out in such a way as to produce a continuous and coherent sense with its own power to please.

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[23] The putative author, Arnobius Afer (died c 330), was a contemporary of Arius (died c 336). Manichaeus (Mani) lived c 216–76, and the Roman presbyter Novatian (whom Erasmus calls 'Novatus') started a schism in 251.

[24] Donatus started his schism in North Africa in 311. Pelagius first published his views in Rome before its conquest by Alaric in 410. Fleeing to North Africa to avoid Alaric, Pelagius there encountered the formidable bishop of Hippo.

[25] A splendid example of the danger of the *argumentum ex silentio*; the real author, Arnobius Junior, was active in Rome more than a generation after Pelagius.

[26] *Ars poetica* 148–9

He does something, again, which is a great achievement even when the subject-matter is crystal-clear: he imparts instruction quite openly, while at the same time fully retaining his hold over our feelings. His language suggests more than it expresses, and as he speeds on his way he leaves in the reader's mind plenty to think about and plenty to spur it into activity, so that you cannot say which is the first effect he produces in you, understanding or enthusiasm. This again is the hallmark not merely of a good scholar but of a teacher who loves his subject. Should anything present itself that needed a reference to some obscure passage in ancient history or to the work of writers on natural history or other subjects, nothing is so abstruse in secular or sacred literature that he cannot suggest it in a few words without any ostentation or desire to show off the extent of his learning, a fault that I often find tedious even in some writers of the highest reputation. His essentially religious subject he treats with an almost apostolic plainness and singleness of mind. He neither collects irrelevant matter nor ever forces the sense of Holy Scripture; whatever he cites seems meant by nature for that context, for in his quotations he has gone for quality, not quantity. Furthermore, though he refrains from humour, which was excluded by the serious nature of his subject-matter, you feel all the same that his style is suffused throughout with some sort of continuous cheerfulness and charm. He himself is nowhere dull or drowsy, and the liveliness of the writing cheers and refreshes the reader. He opens in a way that gives one at once a fresh start; he makes such good speed that sleep cannot overtake us; he ends by sending us away still hungry and anxious to hear more.

Again, while in the works of Tertullian and Origen and almost all the early Fathers there are elements either of manifest error or of dubious doctrine, Arnobius as an author is so well balanced that I have never observed anywhere what could be close to any heresy. For when he writes in his commentary on Psalm 14, 'Jesus however, himself alone without taint, entered the Virgin's chamber, and so freed the tabernacle itself from all taint of the flesh,' he was not thinking of taint which might have been in Mary before Christ's entry, but of that which was normally to be found in other women, from which Christ preserved his mother unspotted; he did not defile her chastity but reinforced it. He seems too to pay the church in Rome the honour of supposing that anyone is outside the Catholic church who is alienated from Rome, since Rome enjoys the headship of the whole church and was found worthy to have Peter, prince of the apostles, as its shepherd. That passage is in chapter 106 of the commentary and in the commentary on Psalm 138. He teaches that some very special power was given to Peter by Christ, whom he had thrice denied, meaning undoubtedly the power of feeding his sheep. Vows are sometimes mentioned, but only those by which, when we professed Christ in our baptism, we renounced the world and Satan, not that I think he despised all other vows, but because he took these to be the most important, as indeed they are. Nor do I doubt that in these notes he derived some assistance from the labours of Origen, who published more dense annotation on the Psalter than on any other book of Scripture. For in several places he makes it clear that he knew Greek well.

All this time someone is waiting to ask me, 'What thanks do you expect for yourself out of this, if you make no generous contribution of your own?' I do not object if Arnobius gets all the credit, provided as much profit as possible flows from this source to those in search of true religion. And yet it is something to have made publicly accessible a book which was hitherto obscure and which was even despised for its faults of style. It is something to have got Johann Froben to the point of printing an unknown work at his own expense and his own risk, for in the hazardous business of publishing his types are not always equally fortunate. Lastly, hardly anyone would credit how much toil it has cost me to correct the errors of the scribe, for which purpose I often had to reread the whole psalm in hopes of scenting out the reasons for the slip. I had to keep careful watch on the solecisms and barbarisms characteristic of this work. In some places the problem fairly called for some Delian swimmer[27] or, better still, a sibyl.[28] I will give one example of this kind of thing. In his comment on Psalm 77 the scribe, losing the thread, had copied down *quod aures in faciens*. These words being quite meaningless, I tormented myself for some time, and then guessed the right answer, that what had been written was *quod auxesin faciens*; for in many scripts the letter *x* is in shape very like an *r*. And so a scribe completely ignorant of Greek and knowing very little Latin had turned *auxesin* into *aures in*. And on Psalm 105 the written text ran *Suscipiat regulam poenitentiae, excluso nova ita ut centesimum quintum psalmum* etc, and I have restored by conjecture *excluso Novato* or *Novatiano*; for both followed the same heresy and would not admit penitents.

So this is a new work, and I dedicate it to a new pope, a work of religion and theology to a pope who is himself a theologian of outstanding personal religion. Your Holiness will, I hope, accept it the more readily inasmuch as I have no ulterior motive in making this modest offering, for I am content with my humble position in the world, slight though it is. All I want is to secure your patronage for this work as it issues forth into men's hands; for of course it will win a heavier harvest of piety if commended by the approval of one who, like yourself, has been raised to that exalted station not by ambition or by any help from men but, as we all believe, by the will of a beneficent deity, to provide someone combining the greatest nobility of character with supreme authority, who may eventually lay to rest these godless disorders in the Christian world that have been with us, alas, far too long and grow continually worse. We behold two of the world's leading princes at loggerheads[29] with enmity in their hearts, and scarcely any part of our world free from war, from bloodshed, and from pillage. And although the Christian religion, which once had spread over all the regions of the world, is now less extensive than the narrow bounds of Europe, yet Europe too is pitifully torn asunder by perilous differences between sects and schisms. And all the time over our wrangling hangs the menace of the Turks.

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[27] Ie, a powerful swimmer, someone who would not be daunted by the book's difficulty; see *Adagia* I vi 29.

[28] Ie, someone who can divine mysteries

With things in such a sorry state, the hearts of all men of good will are filled by something like a mighty hope that even now the storm-clouds may be dissipated and clear shining and tranquillity return to us through you.[30] There is much else that promises us this, but above all your distinction as a man of learning and that nobility of character which all men have remarked on from your earliest years down to this present day; then there are your advancing years, which will permit you to pursue no other goal except Christ's glory and the advancement of his true religion; last but not least the union of minds between you and the emperor Charles, whose power and authority will secure for you the ability to achieve what you judge will be for the best.

At any rate, to expel this vast contagion of moral corruption we need powerful spells, and some sort of enchanter, a master of his art, who can charm wisely. For this purpose I have provided almost a new weapon, not that the Psalms of David did not exist, but for most people they lay silent. It is a property, they say, of man-made music that it can either rouse the emotions or control them if a skilled performer makes an appropriate use of specific harmonies. It is said that Timotheus could kindle the heart of Alexander of Macedon with warlike fire by playing in certain particular modes.[31] Pythagoras, by playing spondees in the Phrygian mode, transformed a young man mad with love and restored his sanity. A similar story is told of Empedocles, who is said by the use of some particular musical modes to have recalled to his proper wits a young man already beside himself with rage and hell-bent on murder. The tales told in antiquity of Mercury and Orpheus playing on the lyre look like fables; and yet these fictions were inspired by the wonders music can perform. Certainly Terpander and Arion in Lesbos and in Ionia are said by the historians to have cured many serious diseases as a regular thing by the use of musical harmonies. Ismenias of Thebes in Boeotia is recorded as relieving the torments of many sufferers from gout in the hip with appropriate melodies.[32] When Virgil says that 'the clammy snake in the meadows is burst by the singing of spells,'[33] this might be ignored as merely the utterance of a poet, had not our own Scriptures mentioned the charmer who charms so wisely and the adder that will not listen.[34] David used his harp to come to the aid of Saul,[35] whenever he was vexed by an evil spirit from the Lord.

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[29] See Ep 1283 n3.

[30] Adrian failed in his efforts to restore peace between Charles V and Francis I; see Pastor IX, ch 5. Cf Ep 1353 n30.

[31] The legend of Timotheus and Alexander was popular in the Renaissance (see, for example, Castiglione's *Courtier* 1.4) and eventually became the basis for Dryden's *Alexander's Feast*. Erasmus probably knew the story from at least three sources: Dio Chrysostom *Discourses* 1.1–3; Basil the Great *To Young Men, On How They Might Derive Profit from Pagan Literature* 8.7–8; and *The Suda* sv Τιμόθεος (T 620).

If then man-made music has such power to change the affections of both body and soul, how much more effective we must suppose this heavenly and divine music to be in purging our hearts of spiritual diseases and the evil spirits of this present world! Ambition is an overmastering disease, ill will and jealousy are a most evil spirit; and the majority of Christians are victims of this kind of plague, even those being often not exempt whose duty it was to cure their fellow men. The pagans of old possessed 'both words and spells,' with which they could 'of their distemper lose the greater part, / And soothe the gnawing canker of the heart.'[36] And surely Christ's music has words and spells with which we can charm out of our hearts the love of things transient and charm into its place the love of heavenly things. Pythagoras commanded musical modes whereby he could recall to sanity a young man beside himself with infatuation; and does not the Christian psalmist command modes whereby he can recall to the love of peace the princes who are endlessly at loggerheads in these most crazy wars? But we must first use this music to cure ourselves before we attempt to cure other men's diseases. There is no part of Holy Scripture that does not have these powerful modes at its

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[32] The stories of Pythagoras, Empedocles, Terpander and Arion, and Ismenias are all found in Boethius' *De institutione musica* 1.1. Basil the Great *To Young Men* (see preceding note) 9. 9–10 and Quintilian 1.10.32 also tell the Pythagoras story.

[33] *Eclogues* 8.71

[34] Ps 58:4–5 (Vulg 57:5–6)

[35] 1 Sam 16:23

[36] Horace *Epistles* 1.1.34–5

command, provided that we do not stop up our ears like deaf adders for fear that the strong magic of the divine enchanter may penetrate into our hearts. But in my view no modes are more powerful than the music of the Psalms; for in this book it was the will of that divine spirit to lay up a store for us of his most secret and delightful mysteries, and in it he enshrined certain musical modes of greatest power, by which we might be changed into a frame of mind worthy of Christ, provided only that there is someone at hand who can wake the strings of this psaltery with proper skill.

This is the special duty of bishops and priests; and yet every individual might learn to play for himself. The spirit will help him as he plucks the strings and will breathe secret power into his inmost parts, if only he provides a pure and fervent heart – the ears, that is, with which a mind that has been purified can listen. Oh that your Holiness might be our new David – that consummate master of this kind of music! – who not only played himself but taught many other singers to do the same. And David was a prototype of Jesus Christ, our psalmist, who, when his body was strung like a harp upon the cross, played nothing common, nothing earthly, but such melodious music as the Father loves, the moving force of which we feel. What harmony of the divine love sounded in that chord: 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do'![37]

The world too has its instruments, but their infernal notes return an unlovely sound. How speak the strings of anger? 'Revenge and rapine, Cast them out, Cut them down!' What tune does ambition play? 'On, on! extend your realm, think not of oaths nor of religion when dominion is the prize.' What twangling notes we hear from avarice! 'You see no man is happy save him who has great possessions; by fair means or by foul get, get and pile and keep!' How sound the chords of luxury and lust? 'Live now to please yourself, for you know not what your portion will be after this life.' No less discordant are the chords played by jealousy and spite. This is of course the music of the world, which by such dreadful strains calls up pestilential appetites within us, and like the Sirens lures us to destruction with notes as sweet as they are fatal. This is the music that intoxicates and maddens us, and so we fight wars, we raise rebellion, we are ambitious, greedy, wrathful, and vindictive; we bite each other and are bitten in turn.

But it was heavenly music that inspired the man who wrote, 'How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea even fainteth for the courts of the Lord.'[38] And again, 'My heart is like wax; it is

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[37] Luke 23:34

[38] Ps 84:1–2 (Vulg 83:2–3)

melted in the midst of my bowels.'[39] Such were the harmonies whose power had breathed upon the apostles when they said, 'Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast the words of life.'[40] Sweet and tuneful indeed is the concerted sound when love, chastity, sobriety, modesty, and the other virtues sing together in harmonious variety. And this music has different styles to suit different themes. In some which, mournful though they are, are pleasing in the ear of God, we lament our sins. Some give us strength and courage boldly to resist the devil. Some are cheerful and full of joy, to use when we give thanks to God for his goodness to us. Some are used to console and comfort the afflicted. In a word, this life offers no kind of trouble that we cannot easily endure, if, as St Paul puts it in his letter to the Colossians, we instruct and admonish each other, with psalms and hymns of praise and spiritual songs singing gratefully in our hearts to the Lord, and if, whatever we do in word or deed, we do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through the Son.[41] And this music will be the more pleasing to God if performed by a numerous choir in harmony of hearts and voices.

But to return to the Psalms of David, no man can appreciate how sweet this music making is unless he has perceived its mystic meaning. What is the reason, otherwise, why so many monks and priests find it so tedious to intone these famous psalms? Surely because they sing them with their mouths, not with their minds. And if any of them have no time to turn the pages of long commentaries by other authors, such men, though hard to please, will find Arnobius a help, for his note is often shorter than the psalm itself, and if they read his brief disquisition they will have sung the psalm and learned its meaning at one stroke. All priests should therefore take special care to master once and for all what they sing every day. As a result they will find more comfort in one psalm which they have learned to understand and have sung with the mind, than in forty sung merely with the mouth. Of one thing above all others our would-be psalm singer must be perfectly convinced, that it was the purpose of the Holy Spirit, and a very wise purpose too, to wrap up the mysteries of heavenly wisdom under these layers of metaphor. The way to unwrap the mystery has been marked out for us by Christ himself in the gospel and by the writings of the apostles. Following in their footsteps, the orthodox Fathers have shown us the rest; but none, in my judgment, in a more religious spirit than Arnobius. He is

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[39] Ps 22:14 (Vulg 21:15)
[40] John 6:68
[41] Col 3:16–17

specially concerned, it is true, to expound any sense which has a bearing on the gospel history, so that, in the words of the Apostle Paul, the knowledge of Christ may be confirmed in us all the more from faith to faith,[42] when we clearly see that whatever we read of as happening in the Gospels was foretold in the Psalms. This is indeed the most difficult aspect in the treatment of the Psalms, and those who have rightly understood it easily conjecture the other meanings even without outside help, once they have had some practice in the detection of mystic meanings. On this topic I have made some observations in the essay I have lately devoted to the interpretation of the psalm 'Why do the heathen.'[43]

But I must draw to a close. Most holy Father, there is this one thing which Christian people hope and expect of you more than all else. Take up Christ's psaltery and play on it some truly apostolic melody which can unite the hearts of princes and peoples in Christian concord, break up these dangerous conflicts of opinion, and fire with love of the heavenly promises those who are destined for the kingdom of heaven. I do not congratulate you on your exalted rank, I do not congratulate the country, and indeed the diocese,[44] which I share with you, which now for the first time has the privilege of providing a Roman pontiff. I have no ambition to advance my standing with you either by our common origin or by our long-standing friendship. But I certainly shall congratulate the Christian world if you fulfil your apostolic office (as I am confident you will) in such a way as to make the world understand that it has at last a Roman pontiff who puts Christ's glory first, who recalls the spirit of Peter and Paul rather than their titles, who does his duty as Christ's vicegerent in such a way that the world feels the spirit of Christ in him alive and active. The people will listen, I do assure you, to the voice of a true shepherd, and he who goes before them in Christ's footsteps will readily be followed by his flock; they will not hesitate to recognize the power of the apostolic see, when they know it stands for apostolic piety. As you attempt this task, may the Lord Jesus, chief shepherd of them all, grant you a favouring wind. Amen.

From Basel, 1 August 1522

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[42] Rom 1:17

[43] Ps 2. Erasmus' commentary on this psalm was appended to the edition of Arnobius.

[44] Utrecht

1305 / To Petrus Mosellanus Basel, 8 August 1522

Petrus Mosellanus was the name used by Peter Schade (c 1493–1524) of Bruttig on the Mosel above Koblenz. From 1517 until his death he taught Greek at Leipzig University.

The letter was first printed by J.G. Weller in *Altes aus allen Theilen der Geschichte* (Chemnitz 1760), one of the miscellanies that were so popular in eighteenth-century Germany. Weller did not say where he obtained the letter, and no manuscript survives.

TO THE HONOURABLE PETRUS MOSELLANUS OF BRUTTIG, HIS INCOMPARABLE FRIEND, FROM ERASMUS, GREETING

I rejoice to hear of your new position, and the chance of seeing you will be a very great pleasure. You will perhaps have me as a companion on your journey,[1] for I am invited to Rome by lavish promises from the cardinals, especially my lord of Sion;[2] yet I have friends who advise against it. Zúñiga is in Rome,[3] raving mad as any Orestes;[4] every month he spews forth a fresh pamphlet full of blasphemies.[5] He has been forbidden by a veto from the cardinals[6] to rant against your friend Erasmus. He has a boon companion, a theologian by the name of Carranza, to whom I am replying in such terms that, if he has any sense of shame at all, he will not attack me a second time.[7] To Zúñiga's crazy pamphlet I reply in a tone of disdain: for the cardinal of Mainz wrote to tell me to answer the Spaniard.[8] He is a shameless buffoon and an ignorant blockhead. This monk is in Rome what Pfefferkorn[9] was in Cologne. I am not surprised to find someone as mad as that in Rome, but it does surprise me that there should be people who think they need be afraid of a brawling rascal like this. Here my German fellow-countrymen are

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1305

[1] Mosellanus' proposed trip to Italy via Basel, mentioned again in Ep 1326:5–7, evidently never took place.

[2] See Ep 1299 n11.

[3] Ep 1260 n36

[4] Orestes was driven mad by the Furies after he murdered his mother Clytemnestra.

[5] Ep 1260 n45

[6] See Ep 1302 n26.

[7] See Ep 1277 n8.

[8] The cardinal's letter is not extant; see Ep 1299 n10. He had evidently changed his mind on the subject of Erasmus' responding to Zúñiga; see Ep 1290:44–5.

[9] Johann Pfefferkorn (Ep 487:22n)

wonderfully bold where moderation was called for, and wonderfully timid when the business needed determination.[10]

The Louvain people and certain monks, Aleandro and Marino,[11] have made desperate moves against me, but so far in vain. I have the emperor on my side, as I know quite for certain, and the king of England, and in Rome nearly all the cardinals.[12] But they would all like me to attack Luther; and I, though I do not approve this Luther business, have many reasons all the same why I would rather do anything than make this my concern. Yet there are members of Luther's party who make far worse mistakes than Luther himself. I can see that there is no doing business with either side. I should be sorry, if it could be avoided, to see the good things in Luther destroyed on account of some bad things; and those on the other side cannot fairly be compared with him.

Of your translation[13] I could form no opinion without comparing the texts, and for this I simply had no leisure; even now I have no time to spare. When I am allowed any leisure, I will not fail to do my duty. The rest we will speak of when we meet. Farewell.

Basel, 8 August 1522

1306 / From Juan Luis Vives Louvain, 15 August 1522

For the source of this letter, see Ep 1256 introduction. The content is closely related to that of Ep 1303, which was written a month earlier.

FROM VIVES TO ERASMUS

I am in great anxiety, and shall remain so until I learn whether the rest of the book reached you safely. I sent it by a young man from Cologne,[1] as Conradus[2] advised, on 15 July, because Karl[3] had decided differently about his leaving from what he had said when Georg[4] was here. Nothing is left to

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[10] See CWE 3 xii and the index to that volume under 'Germany, Germans.'

[11] Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11) and Marino Caracciola (Ep 1263 n1)

[12] See Ep 1302:62–71.

[13] The reference is probably to Mosellanus' translation of Gregory Nazianzen's *De theologia libri quinque* (Basel: Froben 1523), the preface to which is dated 13 June 1522.

1306

[1] See Ep 1303:2–4.

[2] Probably Goclenius, as in Ep 1303:41 and 45. Cf line 30 of this letter.

[3] See Ep 1303:43–5.

[4] See Epp 1292 n2 and 1303:23.

be sent with Hilarius,[5] whom I have not seen yet; they say he has gone to Antwerp, and will be back shortly. I plan to send this letter by him; as I write, I am not wholly recovered or well again, but rather more free from pain than I was a few days ago. Ever since I finished Augustine, I have never been as well as I could wish;[6] last week and this week, my whole body has been much afflicted and my energy borne down by a kind of weariness and weakness – it feels as though ten steeples were resting on my head with unspeakable weight and pressure more than I can bear. This is the reward of all my labours, the recompense for the splendid work I have done; of what avail now the service and the toil? What you say about the mother of a new-born child fits me so neatly, that now that Augustine has been out of my hands for three days, I have begun another book.[7] 'So true is it,' you will say, 'that work is what feeds the mind';[8] but believe me, I need to spend two or three whole months regaining my mental vigour, so that I can recover it by rest and idleness like a fallow field.

I long to see how you have answered Carranza,[9] and the other things you are said to have written where you are now, which are so particularly numerous and important. About Carranza I was clearly wrong; I had been imposed upon by the pretence in his letter,[10] which was the only part of his whole work that I had read. Your letters to More and to the archbishop of Canterbury I sent off to England today;[11] they will get them soon, for many people now return to England every day from the Antwerp fair. I rejoice to hear that you have the support of their Eminences,[12] and that they are so much in favour of your genius and your learning – if it is true, as I was told by someone here who had it from Conradus, about this offer of an annuity,[13] which is a great honour. I wonder you grudge a keen admirer like myself the pleasure of knowing this, for I am the one person you never write to with news of this kind – as though I should enjoy it less than other people or, if it had to be concealed, I could not keep a secret. However that may be, I shall rejoice at all your promotions and at every success worthy of what you deserve, however I come to hear of it; I would rather hear from you, for the more certain the news, the more certain my joy.

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[5] Bertolph; see Ep 1303:39–41.
[6] Cf Ep 1303:49.
[7] Perhaps the *De institutione foeminae christianae,* which was completed in April 1523 but not published until 1524 (Antwerp: M. Hillen)
[8] Ovid *Ex Ponto* 1.4.21–2
[9] See Ep 1277 n8.
[10] Ie, in the letter to Juan de Vergara, 27 December 1521/2, which served as the preface to Carranza's book against Erasmus (see the preceding note)
[11] Neither letter is extant.
[12] Ie, the college of cardinals, who had banned the publication of Zúñiga's book against Erasmus; see Ep 1302:68–71.
[13] Cardinal Schiner's offer; see Ep 1299 n11.

I do in fact need money, but I shall approve whatever you and Froben decide;[14] if you send me something, the two of you, give instructions for it to be remitted as soon as possible. If you wish to write to Vergara,[15] send it to me here. Next month I think of crossing to England. If you have any commissions for me, write to me by way of X[16] when he returns from the Frankfurt fair. At the same time I beg you to send me by the same hand some letters of introduction[17] to your friends there, so that at least they may know that I am a friend of yours and make more of me accordingly; though I do not plan to stay there more than three months or four at most – about which I think I spoke to you at Bruges[18] – I am so tired of teaching that I would do anything rather than return to this dreary life and have schoolboys for company. Ruffault sends you his warmest greetings; he says he will soon be seeing his father, and will make sure when he meets him that this payment to you is not delayed any longer.[19]

Here all is peace. There is a surprising silence on all subjects; all men of good will support you more warmly than ever. Many of the old croakers have fallen silent, and those who croak still will be silenced by death. I hope you will live to see men's feelings towards you become such as what you have done for them deserves, and to behold your own spiritual heirs; those are the days for which you ought to preserve yourself. For he[20] told me that you are damaging your health by excessive study. Here all your friends are longing for you with impatience, and we pray God that he will restore you to us safe and sound.[21] We make ready for battle here with more spirit than we show in actual fighting;[22] and would that we showed less on both sides! Some thousands of Spanish troops are said to have landed in England to be absorbed into the English ranks.[23] Great things are expected of the new

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[14] As payment for Vives' work editing the *De civitate Dei*; cf Ep 1303:29–30.

[15] See Ep 1312.

[16] Probably Franz Birckmann; see Epp 1254 n3 and 1256:145–6.

[17] One of these, Ep 1311, survives.

[18] Presumably during Erasmus' visit there in August 1521

[19] See Ep 1303:62–3.

[20] Presumably the informant mentioned in lines 29–30

[21] On Erasmus' intention to return to Louvain, see Ep 1257:12.

[22] In June 1522 Charles V and Henry VIII had, at Windsor and Waltham Cross, signed treaties committing them to a joint assault upon France; LP III 2333, 2360.

[23] There was no truth in this rumour.

pope. So far he has been a disappointment; but people think he will warm up at this meeting with the emperor, who landed on the coast of Cantabria on 16 July.[24] I fear he will remember, not so much that he is now pope as that he was once the emperor's subject,[25] so that the weight of the authority he used to recognize may drag him to side with the emperor. If only he will bear in mind what he is now and not what he was, there is good hope of peace.

But this we must leave to fate. As to Schrijver[26] and other things, I suppose that you hear from Pieter Gillis[27] and others who know about them. For I am always buried at home and hear nothing; or I hear so late that the news reaches you faster than it does me. In these last few days of the vacation Clava[28] has paid us a visit from Ghent, simply to attend lectures from some Greek or other. What an industrious old man he is! – and we younger men sleep and are not ashamed. Farewell many times over, my beloved teacher.

Louvain, feast of the Assumption 1522

1307 / From Johannes Gallinarius — Breisach, 15 August [1522]

The autograph of this letter, with the address-sheet missing, is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.42). The letter was first published as Ep 158 in Enthoven.

Johannes Gallinarius was the name taken by Johannes Henner or Henlin of Heidelberg, a kinsman of Wimpfeling. Educated at Heidelberg (matriculation in 1495), he later moved to Strasbourg, where he became involved in publishing. Still later he became a priest. At the time he wrote this letter, which is all that survives of his correspondence with Erasmus, Gallinarius was parish priest in Breisach, a post he had assumed in 1516. The last historical trace of him is a letter to Beatus Rhenanus of March 1525 (BRE Ep 446).

Greetings and best wishes. If your health,[1] dear Erasmus, father of learning,

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[24] At Santander; Gachard II 66

[25] As a Dutchman, Adrian had been the subject of Charles of Hapsburg, the future emperor.

[26] See Epp 1299 n24 and 1302:97ff.

[27] Ep 184

[28] See Epp 175:13n, and 301:39n.

1307

[1] Gallinarius had witnessed the breakdown of Erasmus' health during the latter's aborted journey to Brabant in the previous spring. See Ep 1273 introduction.

is on the mend, as I learned from your letter, I am delighted – so much delighted that it makes me reckon myself too in good health. And so, to give me my due, please share my delight with me. Only the day before yesterday I got a work in several books[2] by his most serene and at the same time most intelligent Majesty your friend the king of England, attacking Martin Luther, which maybe you have seen already. The great joy it gave me I can hardly describe, especially as issuing from such a most noble prince against a man at whom not one of our better scholars either could or would let himself go. I believe this was the will of heaven. It is as if that lofty debate which has for so long disrupted the peace of Christendom demanded none but the highest protagonists, the subject of his book required the greatest theologians, and the writing of it were a proper task for a noble and lively mind: all these qualities, united and in good measure, have now, as it seems to me (for I have read the book right through), found a worthy representative in this one most illustrious king. If only our German satraps would regard this prince as the pattern they should follow – and our bishops too, and theologians and monks of this description, our grand doctors of divinity and ordinary mass-priests – it would be greatly to the benefit of Christendom. By his brave onslaught on Luther's basic position, his untiring demolitions, his well-thought-out refutations, this most intelligent monarch has earned all the more credit from Christendom, if we think how few theologians have appeared, though they have most to gain from cutting this hydra in pieces, who have the learning and wisdom to attack the man. In short, in this secular prince I see a combination of theology and eloquence which in our countries is a rare bird[3] indeed. But a prince of such gifts has no need of me to spread his name. You, dear Erasmus, greatest of men, you are very near to him, you are his friend, you know his genius well; and so it has been a pleasure to speak of him to you at undue length, for I am a passionate admirer of you both.

The printer has struck him off in very poor type unworthy of the distinguished subject-matter. They have added, I see, two of your letters;[4] and all this will give you, I suspect, no great satisfaction. There is one request I would like to make, my most learned friend: that in view of my most sincere and genuine devotion and affection for you you would some day write and tell me your opinion of that prince. So I send you a copy of the

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[2] See Ep 1275 n25.

[3] Juvenal 6.165

[4] Epp 1219, 1228. These were included in the edition published by Johann Grüninger at Strasbourg on 9 August 1522 and in another edition from the same press the following month.

book, using a prince for whom I know you have a great regard as a courier to convey my greetings.

I gave our friend Rhenanus[5] a stinging rebuke yesterday for writing so seldom to Erasmus, and hope he will soon reply. And now I have no prayers and wishes, except that I may keep my own health long enough to see Erasmus our glory achieve in health and wealth the age of Nestor;[6] and I assure him that I am most sincerely his. Farewell, from Breisach, on the feast of the Assumption of the blessed Virgin.

Your disciple and faithful servant, Johannes Gallinarius, pastor of the church of Breisach

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1308 / From Wolfgang Faber Capito Mainz, 17 August 1522

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 9) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

On Capito, see Ep 1290.

Greeting! All sorts of stories are spreading about you. Be careful, while you try to keep on good terms with both factions, not to get yourself disliked by both; for I scent something of the kind. The more sagacious members of the papal party detest you as the source and origin of the trouble; to Luther's men on the other hand you are anathema as a deserter from the right side. Hoogstraten[1] in Cologne condemned your writings long ago, I know not which. At Wittenberg to show their contempt they do not yet mention you in what they write; but I fear that your too outspoken letter[2] to Duke George of Saxony will make you the target of many pens. Luther has written a bitter and most abusive answer to the king of England.[3] If we of the papal party were not pretty foolish and at such odds with the truth, the world would never stomach such virulence in attack. Up to now they have tried the pen; we are already nearing the use of force. Feelings are getting up, in the

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[5] Beatus (Ep 327) was apparently summering in Sélestat; see the address on BRE Ep 224 (=Zw-Br Ep 222) of 30 July.

[6] Ie, great old age. Nestor, king of Pylos, ruled over three generations of men; see *Adagia* I vi 66.

1308

[1] Ep 1299 n25

[2] Ep 1125, which had just been published in the *Epistolae ad diversos*

[3] In the summer of 1522 Luther replied to King Henry's *Assertio* (Ep 1275 n25), first in German (*Antwort deutsch auf König Heinrichs von England Buch* WA X-2 227–62) and then in Latin (*Contra Henricum regem Angliae* ibidem 180–222).

direction of battle and bloodshed; there is such a fever of plotting, so much forming of alliances; and everywhere Christ the author of peace is the pretext. I long for the old security. I am no longer out of bowshot,[4] being caught in the service of a prince who thinks more highly of me than I could wish. So much has the court, that necessary evil, tied my hands. In any case, the prince cannot stand that blockhead Hoogstraten. He commissioned me to encourage you to despise a grubby, grovelling opponent, who can bark at your heels, but cannot get his teeth into your reputation. He read your paraphrases on Matthew[5] most attentively, and says he never read anything that had more kindled his love towards Christ. He wished me to ask you on his behalf to devote the same care to explaining John.[6] I have no time now to write more on this. Please let me have an answer.

Farewell, from Mainz, 17 August 1522. Capito

Johannes Oecolampadius sends his greetings;[7] so does my friend Hedio,[8] who is a powerful screecher – preacher, I should have said. You will see everything now poised on the edge of a precipice. It must soon tilt without a doubt, one way or the other, the whole thing.

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[4] During his tenure at the archiepiscopal court of Albert of Brandenburg in Mainz, Capito tried to play a mediating role between Luther and his enemies in order to prevent religious conflict and thus preserve an atmosphere congenial to the humanist programme of enlightened piety. Capito did much, for example, to frustrate Aleandro's attempts to secure the enforcement of the Edict of Worms against Luther. But when, in the winter of 1521/2, Capito tried to restrain Luther's opposition to Archbishop Albert's resumption of the sale of indulgences, Luther denounced him for indifference on vital questions of right and wrong. In March 1522 Capito made his way to Wittenberg to receive pardon. The process of his conversion from humanist into Protestant, which took about a year, had commenced, making his position in Mainz increasingly uncomfortable. See James M. Kittelson *Wolfgang Capito: From Humanist to Reformer* (Leiden 1975) 50–111.

[5] See Ep 1255.

[6] See Ep 1333.

[7] Since leaving Altomünster (see Ep 1258 n4), Oecolampadius had been living at the castle of the Ebernburg (southeast of Mainz), serving as chaplain to Franz von Sickingen (Ep 1342 nn33–4), an early and enthusiastic supporter of the Reformation. At the Ebernburg, Oecolampadius had joined with Martin Bucer, the future reformer of Strasbourg, in the introduction of vernacular readings from Scripture into the traditional Latin service. In August, Sickingen's invasion of the archbishopric of Trier touched off the Knights' Rebellion, which ended disastrously in the spring of 1523. Meanwhile, in the autumn of 1522, Oecolampadius moved to Basel, where the atmosphere was more congenial to one of his pacific and scholarly temperament.

[8] Caspar Hedio was the name taken by Kaspar Heyd (1494–1552) of Ettlingen near Karlsruhe. He matriculated at Freiburg in January 1513, took the MA in 1516, and in April 1519 commenced theological studies at Basel, where he became closely attached to Capito and was on intimate terms with Erasmus'

To Erasmus of Rotterdam, first of theologians, glory of the world, his beloved teacher. In Basel

1309 / To the Reader [Basel, c August 1522]

This is a letter that Erasmus contributed to Vives' edition of Augustine's *De civitate Dei*, published in Basel by Froben in September 1522. Written after all of Vives' introductory material had been received (see Ep 1303), the letter was printed on the verso of the title-page. Only an approximate date can be assigned.

Vives' edition of the *De civitate Dei* was intended to form part of a new edition of Augustine more complete and correct than that published by Johann Amerbach in 1506. Froben had proposed the undertaking to Erasmus in 1517 (Ep 581:22), and by the following year Erasmus was at work on it (Ep 844:275–6). But in 1519 Augustine was laid aside in favour of Cyprian (Epp 975, 984, 1000). By September 1520 Erasmus was again at work on Augustine (Ep 1144) and made steady progress for about a year (Epp 1174, 1189, 1204, 1212, 1218) until the move from Louvain to Basel in November 1521 and the completion of the third edition of the New Testament (Ep 1174 n6) caused further delays.

Meanwhile, the immensity of the task of editing the whole of Augustine anew made Erasmus decide to divide it among a number of scholars (Ep 1341A:1417–40). In the autumn of 1520 Vives agreed to undertake *De civitate Dei* and by the following summer could report considerable progress (see Ep 1222:28–30; see also Epp 1256, 1271, 1281, 1303, 1306). The immense popularity of Augustine's great apologetic treatise in the early days of printing – two dozen editions before 1496, not counting translations – doubtless played a role in the decision to publish it in advance of the rest of the edition.

When the complete Augustine in ten volumes was finally published in 1528/29, *De civitate Dei* appeared as volume 5. The last of the volumes actually to go to press, it was printed as plain text, without Vives' prefaces or notes. This was probably the result of the printers' original desire to omit *De civitate Dei* from the edition on the ground that it had not sold well (Allen Epp

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circle. In October 1520 he followed Capito to Mainz, where he was appointed cathedral preacher. In 1523 he followed Capito to Strasbourg, where he became preacher at the cathedral and a member of the circle of Strasbourg reformers. Despite his adherence to the Reformation, his relations with Erasmus always remained amicable.

1531:36–7, 1889:15–16). When it dawned on them that this was hardly possible in a collected edition, they evidently decided to repair the omission by printing the bare text in 492 pages instead of the 810 annotated pages of 1522. When a revised edition of Augustine (based on the Froben edition) was published by Chevallon at Paris in 1531, *De civitate Dei* was published with all Vives' notes and with a new preface in which Vives' eulogy of Erasmus (Ep 1303 n4) was cut down to a brief formal acknowledgment. Thus the mistreatment of Vives in this matter may have caused some temporary bad feelings between him and Erasmus, although there is no evidence of it in their surviving correspondence.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE READER, GREETING

Importunate requests[1] from the learned have assailed me for some time with the demand that I should do for the entire works of St Augustine what I had done for Jerome's letters.[2] I knew already by experience that no labour is more wearisome or brings less credit and popularity to the man who undertakes it, and I was further deterred by the immense size of the undertaking; but none the less I had begun to turn my unwilling and reluctant mind in that direction. The plan of the whole work which I had formed ran as follows.[3] I had allocated first place to his practice-pieces, those, that is, which he wrote as a catechumen; the second place to the letters, many of which he wrote while still a young man, and which therefore are even more redolent of the study of rhetoric. Third place was reserved for the theoretical or contemplative works, which contribute to the kindling of our minds with love for the things that are eternal, in which class fall his *Confessions* and the *Soliloquia*. To these I should have added the books which relate to the right ordering of life. The fourth was destined for the didactic works, those, that is, in which he teaches the science of theology, in which class fall the books *De doctrina christiana* and *De Trinitate*. The fifth would have contained the controversial pieces, in which he combats various plagues in the way of heresiarchs; and their arrangement would have been dictated by the dates at which the heresies arose and kinship between their errors. For in this department he wrote a great deal, including his *De civitate Dei*. The sixth would have displayed the exegetical works, in which he expounds the books of Holy Scripture, which I was intending to arrange

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1309

[1] See, for example, Ep 922:39–50.

[2] See Epp 326, 396.

[3] This scheme is reproduced in the *Catalogus lucubrationum* of January 1523 (Ep 1341A:1419–37), but was not followed in the actual edition of 1528/9, which was expanded to ten volumes.

according to the order of the books of the Bible upon which he comments. For instance, the commentaries on the Psalter would have preceded the commentary on St John's Gospel, and the gospel commentary would have come before that on the Epistle of the same apostle, and so with the remainder. The seventh would have pointed out the doubtful and spurious pieces – those, that is, concerning which one might well doubt whether they are Augustine's, and then those which are falsely ascribed to him. I also intended to point out those books which have succumbed to the assaults of time. The Greek I should have restored. Errors, introduced by the fault either of scribes or of men with little learning trying to correct what they did not understand, I should have removed, with a full sense of responsibility, and not without the help of ancient and correct copies,[4] of which I had already got together for the purpose several which would seem to have been written in Augustine's own day.[5] The entire work, in view of its immense size, I had decided to divide among a number of scholars, men who would be equal to the task, but so as to provide that each of them would be sure of receiving his own share of the credit without deduction. For this generation of ours includes a great number of men born under happier auspices than I, who can achieve in this department more than I can.

By these means I was hoping to secure that Augustine, the saintly and scholarly Augustine, should henceforward reach a larger public, who would also read him with more profit, as has clearly happened with the works of Jerome – so clearly that even my enemies cannot deny it. Yet when certain brethren of the Dominican fraternity got wind of this audacious enterprise,[6] it was not only at drinking-parties, but even in public sermons that clamour broke out: it was insupportable, and a thing that public opinion could no longer stand, that Erasmus should now proceed to correct the text of Augustine as well, of whose works he did not understand one jot. They even called it heresy to assert that there could be anything in the great man's books that was erroneous or spurious or misunderstood by theologians. For my own part, I have never claimed to be an expert in the rare science of

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[4] Vives' was the first of the early printed versions of *De civitate Dei* to indicate the manuscripts used. He had used three: one procured by Erasmus from Cologne, said to date from the eighth century; one lent by Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342) from St Donatian's at Bruges; and one shown Vives by the Carmelites at Bruges. See Allen's introduction to this letter.

[5] This estimate is probably no more accurate than Erasmus' later statement that the twelfth-century Codex Reuchlini (used in his edition of the Apocalypse) appeared to have been written in the apostolic period; see his annotation to Rev 3:7 (*Qui aperit, et nemo claudit*) LB VI 1097–8 (added in 1527).

[6] Cf Ep 1271 n6.

theology, and yet I do not have so low an opinion of such brains or learning as I may possess as to think that I understand nothing that Augustine wrote, when these potbellies, born for the plough-tail rather than the study, understand it all. The truth of this, dear reader, you would readily accept, if I gave you the names of three or four who are continually pouring out this kind of rubbish, in Louvain and Cologne especially.[7] I have no quarrel with the order;[8] it is those noisy rascals I detest, who boast themselves champions of the gospel and behave like lickspittles – men whom the order would discipline or dismiss, had they any wish to take thought for their own reputation.

And yet in this affair my business is not with theological subtleties but with the correction of the text. I take upon myself a schoolmaster's part; questions of truth and falsehood I leave to those master-minds. If they have found my labours of great value to all who wish to learn in the restoration of Jerome, why have they chosen to protest at this stage, rather than form a provisional view of what I was undertaking on the basis of my earlier success? For instance, the question whether anything is falsely ascribed to Augustine will cease to puzzle anyone who has read *De vera et falsa poenitentia,* in the seventeenth chapter of which Augustine himself is quoted, and quoted in a way that shows that the author of that work disagrees with him.[9] The same thing has happened in a preface prefixed under the name of St Aurelius Augustinus to the commentary on the Psalms, though Augustine himself receives honourable mention in that preface.[10] There is another book put together by some industrious person like a kind of patchwork from the writings of Augustine and others, and ascribed to Augustine.[11] These gross facts are not perceived by our friends, who think themselves more clear-sighted than any roe-deer, any eagle. Last but not least, I too was convinced that there were fewer mistakes in Augustine's works than in Jerome's. But when I corrected a few books by way of experiment, the facts soon taught me that monstrous corruptions were commoner in this author than I had found them to be in Jerome or

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[7] See Epp 1263 n14, 1274 n13, 1299 n25, and 1330:53–8.

[8] Though Erasmus frequently wrote of Dominicans, individually and collectively, with great bitterness, on occasion he also expressed genuine respect for the order because it was relatively unburdened with ceremonies. See, for example, Ep 1196:293–5. For further references, see Ep 1006 n1.

[9] See PL 40 1111–12.

[10] In PL 36 61–4, this appears as 'Praefatio cujusdam recentioris in commentarios Augustini, quos scripsit in Psalmos.'

[11] *Quaestiones Veteris et Novi Testamenti* PL 35 2207–2422

Cyprian.[12] For this, Augustine no doubt has to thank these exceptional admirers of his who alone understand him.

That I am not making all this up will be abundantly proved by the result, if these men once allow me to finish what I have begun. In the mean time I will produce two or three passages from which an intelligent reader can estimate conditions elsewhere. In book 16, chapter 24 of the *Adversus Faustum Manichaeum*, in books of which more than one edition has appeared in print,[13] the text ran as follows: *quem dominus Jesus Christus eadem commendatione commemorat, eiusque autoritatis adductae, eorum refellit errorem resurrectionem negantium,* although in a very ancient codex the uncorrupted reading was preserved: *eiusdemque autoritate Sadduccaeorum refellit errorem.* For Augustine has in mind the passage reported in Matthew chapter 22. Again, in book 16, chapter 33 the text had been doubly corrupted: *vides nequaquam* or *vides ne quamquam,* when one ought to write *videsne quam tibi non dicam* etc. For Augustine refers to Faustus' words which had preceded in chapter 8 of the same book: 'Elsewhere he said, "If you are a Christian, you must believe Christ when he says that Moses wrote of him; if you do not believe that, you are not a Christian." This is always a weak and silly argument, which shows that those who use it have no evidence to which they may point.' So Faustus had represented Augustine as saying, 'If you are a Christian, you must believe Christ when he says, etc,' and Augustine denies that he had ever dealt with Faustus like that.[14] A little further on, in chapter 33 of the same book, *nec illud sibi patere praecipitium* had been written by mistake for the true text, *nec illud sivi patere.* In chapter 6 of the same book, in words spoken by Faustus, who had used an idiomatic expression from the old translation and put *virorum virorum quisquis hoc non gestaverit, exterminabitur,* they had corrupted it to *utrorum virorum.* For Hebrew uses *viri viri* for *quicunque viri,* 'whatsoever man.'

There are countless things of this kind, but this is no place at the moment to recount them, and they can scarcely be recounted without weariness even in their proper places. This is my programme: at my own

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[12] See Ep 1000.

[13] Allen could find no edition other than Amerbach's of 1506. None earlier is listed in CSEL.

[14] In the dispute between Faustus and Augustine over the importance for Christians of the teaching of Moses, Augustine relied on John 5:46: 'For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.' Faustus argued that the text was spurious because there is nothing in the Mosaic books that points to Christ. Augustine defended the text and used it to demonstrate that all that Moses wrote was of Christ. In the passage referred to, however, he denied ever having said that those who disagreed were not Christian.

expense and with incredible efforts, I offer them the standard authorities of our religion in a more accurate and more intelligible shape; and this these pillars of religion, themselves devoted to nothing but their bellies and their appetites, have thought proper to attack in harangues that might cause a breach of the peace. How I wish for one of two things! Either let them devote themselves to studies worthy of men who profess themselves dead to the world or, if they will not mend their ways, let the world mend its own ways and get rid of these styes in its eyes, these drones in its beehives, so that, if they are unwilling to be of any service themselves, at least they may no longer get in the way of others who wish to serve the interests of all men of good will. The support of good men will stimulate my labours far more than the snarling of bad men will discourage them.

And now, in the mean while, here is that admirable book, *De civitate Dei*, more correct than it was before and with more learned explanatory notes – how much more, I would rather the reader discovered from the work itself than took on trust from me. For Luis Vives has extolled my merits far beyond what they deserve,[15] with the result that it would be legitimate to praise him in my turn even did he not deserve it. Farewell, and pray ensure that Johann Froben need not regret his outlay and his toil, for he refuses nothing that can adorn and further and assist the cause of learning.

1310 / To Adrian VI Basel, [c September] 1522

This is the covering letter for the presentation copy of Arnobius (Ep 1304). Thus an approximate month-date can be assigned. The letter was first printed with the 1524 edition (Basel: Froben) of the *Exomologesis*, along with Epp 1329, 1324, and 1338. Subsequently it appeared in all the collections of the *Epistolae*.

Pope Adrian's reply is Ep 1324.

TO HIS HOLINESS ADRIAN VI, PONTIFF-DESIGNATE, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Another man, most holy Father, might at this juncture deploy the whole arsenal of rhetoric in the task of congratulating you on your elevation to the greatest eminence that can fall to a man's lot upon this earth. For my part, I will expend no effort in so doing, for I know well enough how reluctantly you have assumed this office, so unexpectedly conferred upon you. I should perhaps look foolish, were I to express rejoicing at what is for you a source of sighing and groaning, for I am not unaware how hard it is to perform your

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[15] See Ep 1303 n4.

new duties in such a way as to make your performance acceptable to Christ your master, to whom sooner or later you must give an account of all that you have done – especially in times like these, when the whole body of Christendom in both its parts[1] is beset by such great evils, even were they not aggravated by the savage threats of the Turks, and lately indeed not threats alone. But the less reason we have to rejoice with you as an individual, the more emphatically we can congratulate the whole Christian world. This tempest in human affairs absolutely demanded a man like you at the helm. For many indications invite us to expect that you will administer the duties divinely entrusted to you to the advantage of no one save only Jesus Christ and his flock; and may he of his goodness deign to bring your most saintly efforts to good effect, without whose favour every mortal effort is in vain.

As a sort of earnest of my feelings towards you, I now send you Arnobius, whom I happened to have in hand when the best of good news reached us here – that Adrian VI had been set at the helm of affairs; and I will establish those feelings to better purpose and more fully when the opportunity presents itself. Well acquainted as I am with my own unblemished conscience and your native wisdom and sense of justice, I see none the less how great is the influence in this generation of malicious tongues; and I therefore thought it advisable to protect your Holiness against their virulence by a kind of antidote, so that, should any hostile report of me come to your ears, you may either reject it entirely or, if you have any hesitation, may keep an open mind until you have heard my defence. For I have no doubt that before you, the most upright of judges, I shall give a full and sufficient reply to their malignity. Though I know that you would do this of your own accord, I have yet been moved by the wickedness of certain persons who know no rest anywhere, not so much to make a request of you as at least to put you on notice. Hitherto in religious matters I have shown the spirit proper to an orthodox Christian, and so I shall do to the day of my death. If I can persuade neither side[2] to approve my position, I am confident at least of securing Christ's assent that my conscience is clear. Let this be taken as the solemn utterance, not of the proverbial priestess on her tripod,[3] but of an honest heart.

The brevity of this letter will be made up for by a longer preface to the

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1310

[1] Ie, European society (Christendom) in both its temporal and ecclesiastical aspects

[2] Ie, neither his Lutheran nor his Catholic critics

[3] Pythia, the priestess of Apollo who uttered oracles at Delphi

Arnobius. May the Lord Jesus, saviour of all men, long preserve your Holiness to our advantage, and ever deign to be with you as his vicegerent on earth.

Basel, 1522

1311 / To John Fisher Basel, 1 September 1522

This is evidently one of the letters of introduction written at the request of Vives (Ep 1306:43–5). It was first published in volume 2 of J. Jortin's *Life of Erasmus* (London 1758/60), where the text is inaccurate. Allen used the autograph in the British Library (MS Harl 6989.9) as the basis of his version. Since the manuscript is badly worn away in many places on both edges, Allen had to employ a good deal of conjecture in order to produce a complete text.

John Fisher (1469–1535), since 1504 chancellor of Cambridge University and bishop of Rochester, had been a friend and patron of Erasmus since the latter's second sojourn in England, 1505–6.

TO JOHN FISHER

Most peerless of prelates, your letter[1] was a great solace to me in all my troubles. For I am brought low, not so much by the burden of my researches,[2] without which I could not go on living, as by the frequent attacks of illness, first a pestilent rheum[3] accompanied by fever and then the stone,[4] every attack of which – and it attacks me roughly every four days – brings me to death's door. The last onset, which was the most serious of all, caused such inward upheaval that nature cannot reassert herself. The weakness continues, and has been made worse[5] by fever, while my poor body is daily more and more reduced by looseness of the bowels. It seems like some sort of consumption due to old age. My discomforts are somewhat increased by certain blockheads who persistently conspire against me. The last part of the story is now being played out in Rome. The Dominicans are stirring up one Zúñiga,[6] a Spaniard, who is beside himself with ambition and effrontery. All depends on the disposition of the new pope. What he

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1311

[1] Not extant

[2] See Ep 1330 n6.

[3] See Ep 1256 n2.

[4] See Ep 1267 n5.

[5] Reading *accessit*; Allen's *successit*, 'fever has taken its place,' can hardly be right.

[6] See Ep 1260 n36.

was like some time ago, I well know;[7] what he will be like in such exalted office, I know not. One thing I do know: he is entirely a scholastic,[8] and not wholly well disposed to the humanities. His friendliness and loyal spirit I know and have not forgotten.

The subject[9] I should treat of had already occupied my thoughts for several days when your letter arrived, and I will work hard at it, once I have settled somewhere, for ill health compels me to move. I get many letters inviting me to Rome. My lord of Sion renews his offer – five hundred ducats a year, besides the expenses of the journey.[10] But I am terrified by the Alps and the Appennines, to which I doubt whether it would be safe to entrust a frail body like mine. I am expected in France too. The king sent me a safe-conduct with pleasure.[11] But I would rather the monarchs made peace first.[12] In Brabant there is great uproar over Luther.[13] The business has been entrusted to men who hate me, not on account of Luther – they hate me more bitterly than they do Luther himself. My spirit abhors contention. And yet, whatever I intend to do, I must do soon. Whatever it is, I will let you know. I could have spent the winter nowhere more conveniently than here, for things are still plentiful: but the wines of this region do not agree with me.

The bearer of this letter is Luis Vives. I expect you already know his quality by what he has written, and you will learn the rest from talking with him. He is among the number of my friends. Your Robert[14] is at Tübingen as professor of Greek and Hebrew, with a fairly generous stipend. Reuchlin has preceded me to the next world. I have promoted him to the ranks of the gods in a new edition of my *Colloquia* printed this summer.[15] And so farewell to your lordship, and may he who is the source of all our blessings long bless and preserve you. To him you will sometimes be so good as to commend my poor self in your prayers.

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[7] See Ep 1304 introduction and n2.

[8] See Epp 969:21–4 and 1304 introduction.

[9] Either the Paraphrase on John (Epp 1323:22–5, 1333) or the *Ecclesiastes* (Ep 1332:41–3)

[10] See Ep 1299:49–50 and n11, Ep 1342:348–52.

[11] See Ep 1319:5–8.

[12] See Ep 1306 n22.

[13] Probably a reference to the persecution of Nicolaas van Broeckhoven and Cornelis Schrijver; Epp 1299:100–7, 1302:97–102.

[14] Robert Wakefield (d 1537), English Hebraist, educated at Cambridge and Louvain. In the summer of 1522 he accepted an invitation to Tübingen to replace Reuchlin (Ep 290), who had died on 30 June. By March 1524 Wakefield was back in England where, under royal patronage, he had a successful career first at Cambridge and then at Oxford.

[15] Reuchlin is celebrated in the *Apotheosis Capnionis*, first printed in the Froben edition of August 1522.

Basel, 1 September 1522

Erasmus, your lordship's most devoted servant

To the right reverend father in Christ John, bishop of Rochester. In England

1312 / To Juan de Vergara Basel, 2 September 1522

This is a reply to Ep 1277 and was evidently written in response to Vives' offer to carry a letter to Vergara (Ep 1306:40–1). It was first published by Allen from the manuscript, which was an eighteenth-century copy in the Heine Collection at Munich (see Ep 1277 introduction).

I was extremely grateful for your letter, scholarly and elegant as it was, and exhaling a sort of affection for me of no common kind. I am resolved to follow your advice. I have no spirit to take on individuals, especially if they are like Zúñiga[1] and Carranza,[2] both of whom you present to me at length as men of integrity and learning. Perhaps they have these qualities at heart; in what they write, at any rate, there is no sign of them. All the same, I was pleased here too with your native courtesy. I have answered those two most abusive and ignorant pamphlets by Carranza and Zúñiga.[3] The three promised by Zúñiga are still to come;[4] but I undertook not to reply.[5] The college of cardinals had forbidden the printing of his book, so appropriately named *Blasphemies*; it was printed secretly by certain monks for whose

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1312

[1] See Ep 1260 n36.

[2] See Ep 1277 n8.

[3] Zúñiga's *Erasmi blasphemiae et impietates* (Ep 1260 n45) was certainly abusive, but Carranza's *Annotationes* (Ep 1277 n8) were not. For Erasmus' replies see the notes cited.

[4] The title of Zúñiga's latest pamphlet attacking Erasmus was *Libellus triorum illorum voluminum praecursor, quibus Erasmicas impietates ac blasphemias redarguit* (Rome: A. Bladus 1522). The three *volumina* in question were evidently the three 'books' of the *Blasphemiae et impietates* in its original, unabridged form, the publication of which had been banned by Leo X (Ep 1260 n45) and by the college of cardinals (see n6 below); ASD IX-2 26. Zúñiga's attempt to secure the permission of Adrian VI for publication also failed; Ep 1341A:919–20 with n261.

[5] Erasmus promised this in the *Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae*, published as an appendix to the *Apologia* of June 1522 (Ep 1260 n45). But he was provoked to further apologies in March 1524 (Ep 1428) and in June 1529 (Ep 2172).

benefit he is acting this part. Then the sale of it was banned; such is its reception by the leaders of the church.[6] I intend in future not to scratch a scab like this.

Of you, my dear Vergara, I form the highest hopes, I do assure you, on the basis of that letter of yours, which promises nothing common or ordinary. You had deceived me up to now – I had no idea you were such a favourite of the Muses in both tongues. Farewell.

Basel, 2 September 1522
Your sincere friend Erasmus
In haste, with my own hand

To the most polished theologian and practised scholar in both the tongues, Juan de Vergara. At the emperor's court

1313 / To Duke George of Saxony Basel, 3 September 1522

On Duke George, see Ep 1283.

This letter, which is Erasmus' reply to Ep 1298, was written at the beginning of a period of nearly two years during which the correspondence between Erasmus and Duke George was frequently intercepted, perhaps by brigands (Ep 1325:6–7), perhaps by hostile Lutherans (Allen Ep 1499:5–6), perhaps by Heinrich Eppendorf (Allen Ep 1437:90–5) showing his true colours (see Ep 1283 n4). The letter failed to reach Duke George, so three months later Erasmus dispatched a duplicate along with Ep 1325. The duke responded with Ep 1340, but that was intercepted. In the spring of 1524 Erasmus wrote the duke a letter that is now lost. The duke replied with Ep 1448 and sent a copy of Ep 1340. These were delivered in September 1524 (Ep 1499), and communication was thus re-established.

Two contemporary copies of the letter survive. One is in the papers of Frans van Cranevelt at Louvain (see Ep 1298 introduction). The other, the duplicate sent to Duke George, is in the Staatsarchiv Dresden (Loc 10300). For the version published in the *Opus epistolarum*, Erasmus made numerous revisions. Allen's version is based on the Louvain manuscript. The letter has also been published as Ep 14 in de Vocht *Literae ad Craneveldium*.

The attitude toward Luther expressed here forms an interesting contrast to that in Ep 1275.

Greeting, most illustrious Prince. It came as a great joy to me that you should have honoured me with your most gracious letter, when I had been so

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[6] See Ep 1302:68–71 and the notes indicated there.

neglectful in writing to your Highness, being in fact extremely busy and also in indifferent health. That this most perilous division in the world around us should displease you is not surprising; what man could take pleasure in it who has the spirit of a Christian? I only wish that princes would use all their vigilance and unfeigned zeal to lay this great evil to rest, to such good purpose that it never grows again. Which side is at fault is a question it is now perhaps too late to ask. Luther – and this cannot be denied – had chosen an admirable programme, and had begun to perform Christ's work before an approving world when Christ had almost disappeared. If only, in carrying on this great campaign, he had followed more responsible and steadier counsels, and shown more moderation both in his spirit and in what he writes! How I wish that his writings did not contain so many good things, or that he had not ruined his good things by insufferable faults! And yet in this regard certain of Luther's supporters are more seriously in the wrong than he is himself. As it is, since there is now an atmosphere of bitter hatred on both sides, there is some risk that all these good things (which I should be sorry to see destroyed,) will perish together in Luther's overthrow, and then that the victorious party will inflict certain things upon us which no lover of Christ will be able to bear and which seem likely to lead to serious damage to the glory of Christianity and the purity of the gospel.

For if I may be allowed to speak freely before a prince who is as wise as he is kind, the world was sound asleep, pillowed on the opinions of the schoolmen and the petty codes of human legislators, and all it heard of was indulgences and satisfactions and the power of the pope of Rome. Even were these things beyond question true in themselves, they contribute little to the vigour of the gospel, they do not inspire us to despise the world, they do not kindle us to love of heavenly things. Yet these above all else are what should be brought home to us. The pope's authority should not be made light of, but all the glory should be transferred to Christ alone. And with this support[1] some sat upon the papal throne who seek not the things that are Jesus Christ's but, like that Demas condemned by the apostle Paul,[2] are lovers of this world. From this slumber it was essential to arouse the world, and blow the spark of gospel vigour into flame. If only this could have been done with the mildness and the care appropriate to a cause so near the heart of our religion! It was certain monks and theologians who think like monks who took a hand in this business, who aggravated the evil by their foolish,

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1313

[1] Supported, that is, by 'the opinions of schoolmen' and 'the petty codes of human legislators'

[2] 2 Tim 4:10

ignorant, and subversive clamour; what was bad enough they made very bad, and what was small they made great. For at the start there was nothing at risk except the profits of those who sold indulgences. And just as much of what Luther writes is more than most men's ears can bear, so do these people drag in many things which good men and educated men can see will do nothing but harm to the religion that is truly of the gospel. And yet those who write these things are not forwarding Christ's business or the pope's, but their own. It is in their eagerness for personal gain that they undermine the papal cause and cast a shadow on Christ's glory. They neither allow us to approve the elements in Luther that are really Christian, nor do they relax any of their own tenets, but add things still harder to bear to what was there before.

And so, since I saw plainly that both sides were being swept off course by some violence they could not resist, I did not get myself mixed up very far in this confusion, only making it quite clear that I had come to no understanding with Luther's supporters, and that I hate nothing so much as subversion. Though in other ways too I saw that I was no match for so perilous a business, even had I had the leisure to read what they write on both sides; for it all had to be read. Besides which, my age and state of health are already demanding my release from more serious studies. I could never write against Luther bitterly enough to avoid seeming lukewarm to the other party. And furthermore, seeing how terribly Luther's men threaten me already,[3] they would tear no one in pieces so readily as myself if I took the field against them. Enough pamphlets attacking Luther exist already,[4] if that was the way to overwhelm him, and there are men far more effective in this cockpit than myself. Last but not least, it was always my opinion that nothing would lull this sad business to rest so effectively as silence.[5] This is the view of those cardinals and great laymen who are the most intelligent.

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[3] According to a contemporary account, which Allen quotes at length, Erasmus had recently been much exercised by a rumour that Melanchthon was writing a book against him. Earlier in the year, Erasmus had believed that Melanchthon was going to challenge him by publishing his own paraphrases on St Paul; Zw-Br I 502 (Ep 201).

[4] See the long list in Friedrich Lauchert, *Die italienischen literarischen Gegner Luthers* (Freiburg im Breisgau 1912; repr Nieuwkoop 1972) 688–9. For a list of works by Luther's northern opponents, see Karl Schottenloher *Bibliographie zur deutschen Geschichte im Zeitalter der Glaubensspaltung 1517–1585* I (Stuttgart 1956) 458–60.

[5] Ie, a silence imposed on all parties; see Ep 1007:118–27.

The pope has published a most savage bull,[6] and its only effect has been to embitter the conflagration. It was followed by an even more savage edict from the emperor,[7] who is entirely devoted to this question. This is restraining some people's tongues and pens, but it cannot change their minds. The emperor's pious intentions do him credit; but his judgment in this matter is commonly attributed to men to whom the learned give little weight.

For the rest, I have never had any doubts that the book by his Majesty the king of England,[8] which you have good reason to speak well of, was fashioned by the intelligence of the same man whose name it bears, by his own bow and spear as the saying goes.[9] That prince has a wonderfully fertile and subtle intelligence, which is extraordinarily effective in any field upon which he turns it. And as a boy he practised his pen with some diligence, even writing letters to me personally.[10] It is not many years since he composed a theological disputation on the theme whether a layman has an obligation to pray out loud.[11] It is his wont to have some acquaintance with books of scholastic theology, and he enjoys the discussion of some theological point even over his wine. Sometimes the discussion on some

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[6] The bull *Exsurge domine*, published at Rome on 15 June 1520, threatened Luther with excommunication if he did not recant forty-one enumerated errors within sixty days of the bull's official publication in Germany, which took place at the end of September. Luther's books were to be burned. The bull was immensely unpopular in Germany, where it was felt that Luther had been condemned without a fair hearing, and most magistrates refused their co-operation in the execution of the bull. Luther not only wrote in defence of the condemned articles (WA VII 308–457) but also symbolically burned the bull, along with a copy of the canon law, at a public bonfire outside the Magpie Gate at Wittenberg (10 December 1520). The bull formally excommunicating Luther, *Decet pontificem romanum*, was published at Rome on 3 January 1521.

[7] The Edict of Worms, based on a draft by Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11), signed on May 1521, outlawed Luther and forbade the reading or the dissemination of his writings. It also subjected the publication and sale of all books to episcopal censorship and placed religious works under the supervision of the theological faculties. But effective enforcement of the edict was impossible because of widespread popular support for Luther, patriotic resentment of Rome, and the feeling that only a general council could render authoritative judgment on the issues raised by Luther.

[8] See Ep 1275 n25.

[9] *Adagia* I vi 19

[10] See Ep 206.

[11] See Ep 964:132n.

literary topic is prolonged until late at night. His queen[12] has had an elegant education. If however he had had any help in the writing of that book, he had no need of any assistance from me, for his court is stuffed full of men who are excellent scholars and write with great style.[13] If his way of writing has something about it not unlike my own, there will be nothing new or strange in that, since as a boy he applied himself studiously to my works at the suggestion of my honoured lord William Mountjoy,[14] whom he had then as the companion of his studies.

Two pamphlets by Luther[15] were sent me by your Highness to no purpose, since I cannot read the language in which they are written.[16] – though I am told that they were in circulation here a long time before you sent them. It seems to me the height of folly to challenge those whom you cannot beat. All the same, to remind princes and bishops of their duties, as often as the actual facts give you an opportunity, has its value, and is covered by the example of the most acceptable authors. Jerome does it sometimes, and so do Chrysostom and Bernard. There always have been bishops and there always will be, and perhaps there are some today, who are intoxicated by the sweets of fortune and forget what it means to behave as a bishop should. And what is said of a class ought not to be twisted into criticism of any individual; provided only that it is said with no subversive or offensive intentions, and that the bitterness of the strictures is tempered always with the sweetness of Christian charity. The authority of bishops ought not to be diminished, but the best way to obtain it and preserve it is to be a good bishop. The whole of this evil, or at least a great part of it, arises from ourselves: we devote ourselves wholeheartedly to the world, and yet we shelter under titles that are Christ's. If we could cut off this evil at the root, the world would accept us with enthusiasm as fathers; as it is, it hates us as tyrants, and it rebels.

I wait to see which way the new pope will invite us to follow.[17] Perhaps

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[12] Catherine of Aragon, whom Erasmus greatly admired; see Epp 296:124, 855:34–6, 948:226–7, 964:80, 968:14–17, 976:44–5, and Allen Epp 1381:38–40, 1404:24–5.

[13] Cf Epp 821:1–2, 832:38–41, 855:32–51, 917:14–21, 966, 968–70, 976, 1004, 1005:35–7, 1028:1–2, 1031:21–5, 1032:24–6.

[14] Ep 79

[15] See Ep 1298:26–33 and n4 to that letter.

[16] Cf Ep 1342:830–1. Duke George refused to take this spurious claim seriously; Ep 1340:15–18. In Allen Ep 1499:10–12, Erasmus repeated it even more strongly. Erasmus in fact knew German well enough to review translations of his own works and to demand extensive revisions; see Holeczek 228–9.

[17] See Ep 1304 introduction.

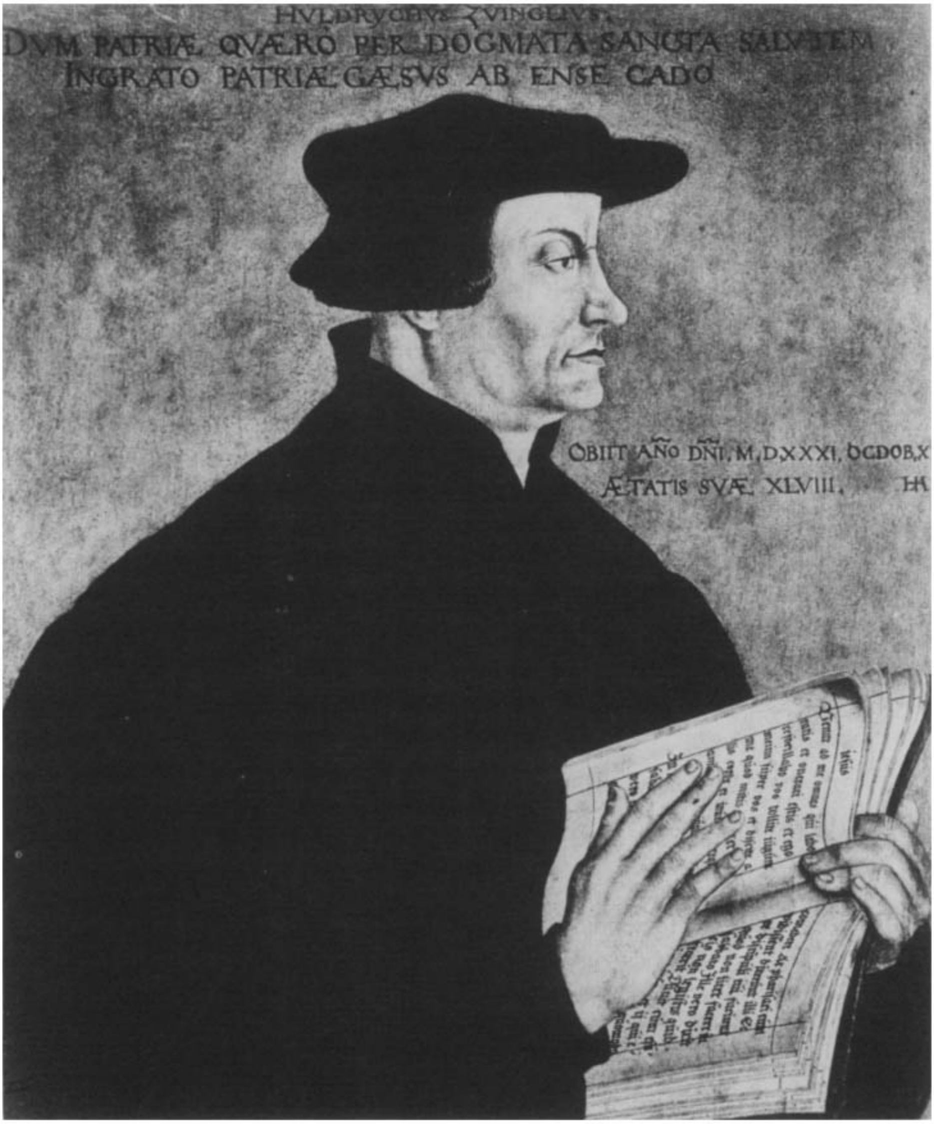
he will show us some way of putting an end to this evil, which has spread widely over so many parts of the world, and has taken deep root in many hearts. For myself, as far as age and brains and strength and time permit, I shall not be found wanting in the cause of Christian faith and Christian concord, as indeed I have done hitherto to the best of my ability. You in your wisdom, most illustrious Prince, must see to it that what I now write to you with some freedom is not allowed to damage me in the eyes of other men, who can twist anything into a cause of scandal. May your illustrious Highness long be preserved in health and wealth by Jesus the Almighty Lord.

From Basel, 3 September 1522
Erasmus of Rotterdam

1314 / To Huldrych Zwingli — Basel, [3?] September 1522

This letter (=Zw-Br Ep 235) was first published in Johann Kaspar Hess *Lebensbeschreibung M. Ulrich Zwinglis* (Zürich 1811), II (=the 'litterarisch-historischer Anhang' by Leonard Usteri) 563. The autograph is in the Rehdiger Collection (MS Rehd 243.135) of the University Library at Wrocław. The month-date in the manuscript, '5. *Nonas Septembr.*,' obviously needs correction since there is no such date in September. Allen accepted the suggestion of the editors of the Zwingli correspondence that the invitation to Erasmus to come to Zürich (see below) was the result of Michael Hummelberg's letter of 26 August (Zw-Br Ep 232) but that this friendly letter probably preceded the sharply critical Ep 1315. It thus seems likely either that 5, which is unmistakable in the manuscript, was a miswriting for 3, or that Erasmus calculated in September as for October.

Zwingli and Erasmus had exchanged letters in 1516 (Epp 401, 404), when Zwingli was still parish priest in Glarus and an ardent Erasmian humanist. In January 1519, after two years as chaplain to the abbot of Einsiedeln (November 1516–December 1518), Zwingli became parish priest at the Grossmünster in Zürich, where he soon crossed the threshold from Erasmian reform to Protestant Reformation. By the time Erasmus wrote this letter to him, Zwingli had long since become the acknowledged leader of a reformation being carried out under the authority of the city magistrates in defiance of the bishop of Constance. In March 1522 a number of Zwingli's supporters violated the Lenten fast, an action which he defended from the pulpit and in print. When the bishop complained of this and other violations of church law, Zwingli responded in August with the *Apologeticus Archeteles*, his first extensive defence of the Reformation at Zürich against the charges of heresy and innovation. Learned in content but often indignant and ironic in tone, the


HVLDRYCHVS ZVINGLIVS.
DVM PATRIÆ QVÆRO PER DOGMATA SANCTA SALVTEM
INGRATO PATRIÆ CÆSVS AB ENSE CADO
OBIIT AÑO DÑI. M.D.XXXI. OCDOB.X
ÆTATIS SVÆ. XLVIII. HA

Huldrych Zwingli
Portrait by Hans Asper, 1531
Kunstmuseum Winterthur

Apologeticus attacked Catholic institutions and traditions from the basis of *sola scriptura*. In the interest of civic peace, however, the pace of reformation in Zürich was deliberately slow: not until April 1525 was mass formally abolished.

In 1522 Zwingli still retained his high regard for Erasmus, who he hoped would be won for the Reformation. He reportedly visited Erasmus in Basel in January 1522; *Die Vadianische Briefsammlung der Stadtbibliothek St. Gallen* ed Emil Arbenz II (St Gallen 1894) Ep 301; Zw-Br Ep 200. Moreover, in letters no longer extant Zwingli proposed that Erasmus accept citizenship in Zürich (Ep 1342:585–9), which presumably would have involved taking up residence there. This letter is Erasmus' response to that proposal.

I am most grateful to you and your city for your kindly thought. My own wish is to be a citizen of the world, to be a fellow-citizen to all men – a pilgrim better still. If only I might have the happiness of being enrolled in the city of heaven! For it is thither I make my way, under the constant attacks of all this illness.[1] Nor do I see why I should want what you offer me. I know for certain that the emperor's feelings towards me are friendly.[2] The order of cardinals as a whole supports me.[3] Nor is there any danger except from some raving Jacobins[4] whom I could name. Even that city of yours could not restrain them from ranting against me and my books to their hearts content.

I like Vadianus[5] no less now that I have seen him[6] than I did on reading

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1314

[1] See Epp 1302:35–50, 1311:3–11.

[2] See Ep 1302 n21.

[3] See Ep 1302 n26.

[4] The Parisian name for the Dominicans, whose convent was in the Rue St Jacques, near the church of the same name

[5] Joachim Vadianus, the name taken by Joachim von Watt (1484–1551) of St Gallen. Educated at the University of Vienna (MA 1508, MD 1517), he taught there in the arts faculty from 1514, becoming professor of rhetoric in 1516 and serving as rector in 1516–17. Among the works written in this period was a volume of scholia on the *De orbis situ* of Pomponius Mela, published at Vienna in 1518.

In 1518 Vadianus returned to St Gallen, where he was appointed town physician. In 1521 he succeeded his father as a member of the city council, and at the end of 1525 he became burgomaster. Meanwhile, he had adopted the reformed faith and in the years 1524–7 directed the introduction of the Reformation into the city. Thereafter he devoted his energies to his medical and municipal duties and to the composition of geographical and historical works, including a voluminous chronicle of the abbots of the famous monastery at St Gallen.

On two occasions that we know of, Vadianus attempted to initiate a friendly what he writes.[7] He is the most open-hearted of men. I gave him a lukewarm welcome – conversation only. My health insisted on that, for it cannot face dinners. We shall soon see which way Christendom is turning. Our new pope is a theologian.[8] For my part, so far as the world we live in allows, I shall not be wanting in Christ's service as long as I live. Fight on, dear Zwingli, not only with courage but with prudence too. Christ will grant that you fight also with success. Farewell.

From Basel, [3?] September 1522
Your sincere friend Erasmus
To that most unsleeping of pastors Huldrych Zwingli. In Zürich

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1315 / To Huldrych Zwingli Basel, 8 September 1522

The autograph of this letter (=Zw-Br Ep 236) is in the Staatsarchiv Zürich (E.II.339:87). It was first published in J.H. Hottinger *Historia ecclesiastica novi testamenti* VI (Hannover 1665).

Greetings, dear Zwingli, my most learned friend. I have read some pages of your *Apologeticus*.[1] I beseech you by the glory of the gospel – which I know you have at heart above all else, as all of us are bound to do who are enlisted under Christ's name – if you publish anything in future, it is a serious task, and you must take it seriously. Do not forget the modesty and the prudence demanded by the gospel. Consult scholarly friends before you issue anything to the public. I fear that defence of yours may land you in great peril, and even do harm to the church. In the little I have read there was

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relationship with Erasmus, whom he greatly admired: by letter (now lost) in 1518, and by means of a personal visit in 1522 (see the following note). But Erasmus reacted coldly and no correspondence between the two men developed. Vadianus nevertheless retained his high opinion of Erasmus, whom he later eulogized, along with Luther and Zwingli, as one of the fathers of the Reformation; *Deutsche historische Schriften* ed Ernst Götzinger I (St Gallen 1875) 6–7, 469.

[6] Vadianus apparently visited Erasmus in Basel in the summer of 1522. Erasmus' brief, rather frosty comments in this letter are the only historical record of that visit.

[7] Perhaps a reference to the second edition of Vadianus' scholia on Pomponius Mela (see n5), published by Cratander at Basel in January 1522, in which (page 160) Vadianus praised Erasmus as a 'true Camillus of sacred letters and true theology.'

[8] Cf Epp 1311:17–18, 1304 introduction.

1315

[1] See Ep 1314 introduction.

much on which I wanted to see you put right. I do not doubt that with your sound sense you will take this in good part; for I write with the warmest affection for you, and late at night. Farewell.

Nativity of the BVM 1522
Your friend Erasmus
To the most worthy Master Huldrych Zwingli, pastor in Zürich

1316 / To Konrad Heresbach Basel, 18 October 1522

This letter first appeared in the *Opus epistolarum.*

Soon after writing Ep 1315, Erasmus, accompanied by Beatus Rhenanus (Ep 327) and Heinrich Eppendorf (Ep 1283 n4), paid a visit to Johann von Botzheim (Ep 1285) in Constance. The visit lasted about three weeks (Ep 1342:500). One of Erasmus' reasons for making the trip was concern for his health, which was adversely affected by the local wines in Basel (Ep 1311:22, 33–4). His intention was to go on to Rome in response to the numerous invitations he had received. But a bad attack of the stone at Constance and reports of the dangers facing a traveller to Rome compelled him to abandon the thought of so long and arduous a journey (Ep 1319:11–16). With the aid of some agreeable wine from Burgundy (lines 26–8) his health improved, and by the end of September he was back in Basel, though still determined to move elsewhere as soon as possible (see Ep 1319 introduction). Either on the way to Constance or on the way back, Erasmus received a most flattering welcome in Schaffhausen (BRE Ep 228). An expected visit to Zürich (Zw-Br Ep 237) did not take place. At Constance, Botzheim was a splendid host, and men of every station treated Erasmus royally. Ep 1342:369–503 provides an unusually detailed account of the visit, and there is a brief account of it in the colloquy Ἰχθυοφαγία, 'A Fish Diet' (ASD I-3 530–1; Thompson 350–1).

Konrad Heresbach (1496–1576) was a young humanist of whom Erasmus had a high opinion (Ep 1364) and whose successful career Erasmus helped to launch. After graduating MA at Cologne in 1515, Heresbach studied law in France for two years (1517–19) before returning to Cologne. Following Erasmus' visit to Cologne in November 1520, and conceivably as a result of it, Heresbach was by December of the same year working as a corrector for Froben in Basel. In 1521, again possibly on Erasmus' recommendation, Heresbach became professor of Greek at Freiburg. The following year he visited Italy briefly in order to become a doctor of civil law at Ferrara. Erasmus and Heresbach no doubt discussed the latter's future during Erasmus' visit to Freiburg in March 1523 (see n1). With the help of Erasmus and Johann von Vlatten (Ep 1390), Heresbach became in September 1523 tutor to young Duke William V of Cleves, a post he held until 1535, when he became privy councillor. He exercised a decisive influence on the Cleves ecclesiastical ordinances of 1525, 1532, and 1562. He also played an important role in the legal and educational reforms of the period 1550–61. To the end, Heresbach was an Erasmian moderate, aiming at the reconciliation of the confessions and refusing to break with the old church.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO KONRAD HERESBACH

I must say, my most learned friend Konrad, you have not far to go to find happiness, if such a little thing will make you happy. You say in your letter that you would be happy, the moment it is your good fortune to have me as your guest.[1] Great indeed is the felicity for which you envy Constance, and such other poor towns as I have honoured (so you put it) with my presence! I on the other hand lament my own infelicity, for I am weighed down with so many troubles that wherever I take refuge I am not merely a burden to myself (my complaint being so unmerciful and my health such a handicap[2]), but I am obliged to be burdensome even to those to whom I should most wish to give pleasure.

In Constance I was ill all the time, staying with Johann von Botzheim, who, besides being a good scholar and a man of the highest character, is such good company that he could cheer up a corpse. The bishop of Constance himself,[3] the mildest and worthiest and most honourable of men, did all he could to show me kindness. I had no less courteous welcome from Ennio, bishop of Veroli,[4] the apostolic nuncio. Hummelberg too[5] – a really charming person – paid me a visit immediately, and so did many others. Had none of these been available, I had the company of the most agreeable man I know and my dearest friend, Beatus Rhenanus. Is Beatus ever without a smile? My life upon it, he is the most civilized and intelligent man I ever met. To all of them I brought nothing but trouble; and on this account, as you may suppose, found my complaint even more troublesome, though it caused me infinite trouble taken by itself. If only I could find their stove-heated rooms[6] and their wine as agreeable as I do their climate and the kind of men they are! At last, when I had given up hope, I secured some

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1316

[1] Heresbach's letter is not extant. Erasmus subsequently accepted the invitation, visiting Freiburg early in March 1523; Ep 1353 introduction.

[2] See Ep 1256 n2.

[3] Hugo von Hohenlandenberg (d 1532)

[4] Ennio Filonardi (Ep 1282)

[5] Ep 1253 n6

[6] See Ep 1258 n18.

Burgundy,[7] and learned from the results that all my sufferings hitherto had come from the thin fluids of this part of the world. So, unless Burgundy sends wine here, I have made up my mind to go to Burgundy. Count Arnold,[8] who is indeed just the man you described, once did me the honour of coming to supper.

I will not ask you to give our little Erasmius[9] the education that will make him worthy of his excellent parents and of you as his tutor, nor will I lay down how that should be done, for fear I seem to have too low an opinion of your sense of duty or your common sense. I will say only this, that by doing us that service you will earn no less gratitude from me than from his parents, although quite rightly they are specially devoted to the child; and apart from the affection they both feel for you, you know that neither of them is mean or ungenerous.

I have no feelings against a visit to Freiburg before midwinter, but I am frightened of the stoves and the wine. I have now moved into another house[10] and set up as an apprentice householder. Henricus Glareanus[11] – and may there be a blessing on it! – has a wife after his own heart. The wedding ceremonies will shortly take place with dance and song;[12] so you have good reason to wish him well. He is, to be sure, one of the most straightforward of men, in my opinion, and deserves that not only this marriage but everything should go well.

Farewell, best of teachers in the best of subjects, and give my greetings to all those in your part of the world who wish me well.

Basel, St Luke's day, 1522

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[7] A gift from Nikolaus von Diesbach (Ep 1258 n17). From this point on, Erasmus preferred Burgundian wine to any other (see Epp 1319:17, 1341A:1494–5, 1838–9, 1342:504–41).

[8] Unidentified

[9] Froben's youngest son (Ep 1262), who was in Freiburg being tutored by Heresbach (AK Epp 874:15–16, 879:28)

[10] The house 'zur alten Treu' on the Nadelberg, which Erasmus had occupied on an earlier visit. Froben had purchased it on 18 December 1521, perhaps with the intention of making it available to Erasmus; see AK Epp 902:23 with n3 to that letter, and 915:19–20. The attraction of the house was that in one of the rooms there was an open fireplace rather than a stove (Allen Ep 1422:28–9). Froben offered it to Erasmus rent-free, but he insisted on paying; Ep 1342:582–4.

[11] Ep 1264 n2

[12] By 28 November the ceremonies had taken place. Erasmus, who could not attend because of the stoves, sent two coins, one of Trajan and one of Alexander the Great, as a present; Zw-Br Ep 252.

1317 / From Frans van Cranevelt Mechelen, 24 [October 1522]

As in the case of Epp 1298 and 1313, the manuscript of this letter is part of the Cranevelt collection discovered by Professor de Vocht at Louvain. Allen's edition appeared first; de Vocht's is Ep 20 in his *Literae ad Craneveldium*. The manuscript is apparently Cranevelt's rough draft rather than the letter actually sent. The beginning of the manuscript and the right-hand edge have been destroyed, leaving small gaps that had to be filled by editorial conjecture. The month and year were easily deduced from internal evidence (lines 9–12).

Frans van Cranevelt (Ep 1145) had been town pensionary of Bruges, ie, chief legal adviser to the town magistrates, since 1515. In Bruges he formed close ties of friendship with Vives, among others. He probably first met Erasmus in Louvain, which he often visited, in the summer of 1517, though an earlier meeting in 1514 is possible. At any rate, they became and remained steadfast friends. In 1522 Cranevelt became unhappy with his circumstances in Bruges because the magistrates, despite their high opinion of him, would not give him the salary he thought necessary to support his large family. In September of that year he was appointed to the Grand Council of Mechelen, the highest court of justice in the country, a post which he held for the rest of his life. His duties left him ample leisure to write poetry, to study Greek, and to follow other humanist pursuits.

I wrote to you the other day, only a brief letter, but with a very definite purpose, for being uncertain of my future and whether I was in or out of luck, I wanted even so, and with apologies, to extract something from you in the way of a letter. You know the position I have held for some years in Bruges. The disasters of this war[1] have brought Flanders so low that she could no longer maintain a man who cost her so much, and with a hen and numerous chickens too. They wanted to give me less pay than had been the practice, while I on the other hand was asking for a little more. So there was a split. I was invited to Mechelen at a higher salary and to a more distinguished post with the council of his Imperial Majesty.[2] In which nothing was more troublesome than the move. The day before yesterday my wife and children arrived,[3] and we are busy finding a place for our

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1317

[1] See Epp 1283:11–13, 1284:41–2, 1306:60–1.

[2] Cranevelt's letter of appointment was dated 27 September 1522; de Vocht *Literae ad Craneveldium* liii.

[3] Cranevelt's wife and family arrived in Mechelen on 22 October 1522; ibidem.

belongings. We are still the guests of Dr Jan Robbyns,[4] the dean of Mechelen, where your man Hilarius[5] found me, bringing a letter from you[6] and one from my friend Fevijn,[7] whom I should much like to have, need I say, as my Hercules in the rescue of Theseus,[8] if I may compare small things with great.[9] Farewell, my distinguished friend.

From Mechelen, 24 [October]

Such as he is, your most devoted Cranevelt

1318 / From Antoine Brugnard Montbéliard, 4 November 1522

Antoine Brugnard (fl 1522–47) came from the little village of Brugnard near Montbéliard. Some time after writing this letter he received a canonry in his native town. In March 1532 he became principal of the College of Grammar at Dôle. In 1539 he left Dôle to teach in Orléans, but in 1542 he returned to Dôle and resumed his principalship until 1547. After that, nothing is known of him.

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 10) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, THE EMINENT TEACHER OF REAL LEARNING, GREETING

Expecting to leave Antwerp on 5 June, I asked Pieter Gillis[1] whether, as I was setting off in your direction, he proposed to give me a letter for you. He at once said he would, but he did not do so, being afraid perhaps that it might be intercepted; for he was so anxious to avoid any suspicion of the Lutheran heresy that he did not even dare exchange a word with me. He had heard in Brussels and seen for himself in Antwerp how his colleague Cornelis

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[4] Jan Robbyns (d 1532) was elected dean of St Rombout's in Mechelen in 1502. He was a frequent visitor in Louvain, where he and young Dr Cranevelt became close friends.

[5] Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10). For his journey at this time, see Ep 1322:1.

[6] Not extant

[7] Jan van Fevijn (1490–1555), who had studied law at Louvain and in Italy, was canon of St Donatian's at Bruges, where he was an intimate friend of Marcus Laurinus (Ep 1342) and Cranevelt. Over ninety letters from Fevijn to Cranevelt are found in de Vocht *Literae ad Craneveldium*.

[8] Perhaps a reference to Nicolaas van Broeckhoven or Cornelis Schrijver, both of whom Erasmus was attempting to get released from imprisonment; Epp 1299:100–7, 1302:97–104, 1318

[9] Virgil *Georgics* 4.176

1318

[1] See Ep 1293 n5.

Schrijver had been made a public butt and compelled to recant,[2] dressed in a yellow sheet, and how, all his property having been confiscated, he would have to remain there in some form of confinement until the emperor should decide otherwise. There was also a rumour that Nicolaas,[3] the headmaster of the Antwerp high school, and a certain number of priests had been condemned to life imprisonment on a diet of bread and water, and that some laymen too had had their property sequestered and had themselves been mutilated. Such terror had seized everyone there who had ever spared Luther a thought that scarcely anyone thought himself safe, and they all looked as though some baleful star had struck them.

Finding myself in the same boat, I thought it wiser to retire to a safe place than to remain in jeopardy, especially as, not long before, my pupil's guardians had dismissed me. So I came here, a sixteen-day journey; but I did not get to Basel to see you and pay my respects, for my travelling companions had no business to do there and did not want to make the detour. I myself, knowing no German, was very much afraid that if I went off on my own I might fall among rascals; nor have I yet had the chance to do so, or even to write. I have also been prevented by fate, which has thrown all my affairs here into confusion, coupled with travel and ill health. But now that I can, I do what I ought. So here I am writing, more unskilful stuff than you can be expected to read or listen to, but I write all the same, for fear of not paying my debt, by which I mean not sending you greetings and assuring you how devoutly I hope you are well, and at the same time to let you know how I am situated, for you are the most reliable of benefactors whether in deed or word to all that flee to you for help. This is no place for me. Here anyone who loves letters is deemed a nobody; indeed, anyone who has had even a sniff of them is laughed at or disliked. What I want, you can guess from this: I want to go somewhere else, and not wither away here doing nothing. Teaching or, better still, learning – there is nothing I would rather have than that. And so this is the one thing I do earnestly beg of you, that if you know of anyone who can use me, be so kind as to write to him or have a word with him.

Farewell, from Montbéliard, 4 November 1522

Antoine Brugnard, lately tutor to François Gualthierot[4]

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, most scholarly teacher of sound learning. In Master Froben's house, in Basel

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[2] See Ep 1299 n24.

[3] Nicolaas van Broeckhoven (Ep 1299 n23)

[4] Unidentified

1319 / To François de Tournon Basel, 10 November 1522

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. It is the first surviving letter in which Erasmus discusses his plans to leave Basel, where not only the local wines (Ep 1316 introduction) but also the growing 'uproar over the gospel' (Epp 1293 n8, 1327:11–13) were a source of increasing distress to him. A projected trip to Rome was abandoned for the reasons stated here (lines 10–16). But the idea of migrating to France (lines 19–21), a move from which Erasmus expected great benefits (Ep 1342:616–26) and for which he had already been laying the groundwork (lines 4–7, Ep 1342:599–608), was still alive. That the move did not take place may be attributed to the discovery that Burgundian wines could easily be sent to Basel and, more important, to the disappointment of Erasmus' hopes for the restoration of peace between Francis I and Charles V (Epp 1342:590–637, 1345:2–6).

François de Tournon (c 1489–1562), who had met Erasmus in Basel earlier in 1522 (Ep 1342:601–7), was an Augustinian whose services to the French crown as adviser and diplomat were rewarded with rapid advancement in the church. He acquired successively the sees of Embrun (1517), Bourges (1525), Auch (1538), and Lyon (1551). In 1530 he became a cardinal, and in 1560 he rose to be dean of the Sacred College. In 1552 he founded a college at Tournon which subsequently flourished as a Jesuit academy.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO FRANÇOIS, ARCHBISHOP OF EMBRUN, GREETING

Not many days ago I sent letters[1] by Konrad the German bookseller,[2] who has a house in Paris, both to you and to Budé[3] and Brie[4] and Bérault.[5] They all claim the credit for securing a safe-conduct from the king,[6] which gave me very great pleasure, to be sure, but it would have been greater had the king signed it with his own hand.[7] Even so, they tell me, I cannot safely move to your part of the world, for they say that ruffians are not much moved by royal safe-conducts if one should chance to fall into their hands, while among respectable folk I should have no need of one. But there is much that

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1319

[1] None of these letters survives, but Budé's reply, Ep 1328, does.

[2] Konrad Resch (Ep 331:15n) had family links with the book industry of Basel and ran a bookstore in Paris.

[3] Ep 403

[4] Ep 1284 n13

[5] Ep 1284

[6] Cf Epp 1311:26–7, 1328:44–5, 1342:612–13.

[7] In Ep 1375 Francis complied with this wish.

still detains me here. My health first of all, which gave me the greatest trouble at Constance[8] – for I had betaken myself to Constance, meaning to go on to Rome had I been allowed to; for many people assured me that it might be to my advantage if I presented myself before the new pope. Then fearsome reports began to arrive from that part of the world – war and plague raging everywhere, and then that no journey was safe. Later on I secured some wine from Burgundy and began to feel better;[9] so you can see that by some fate or other France is good for me. All this time I am waiting for some faint breath of peace from this pope, and as soon as we are clear of midwinter I shall migrate bag and baggage to France.

On the question of my annuity from the emperor,[10] which is now owing for the whole of this year, they keep on putting me off, and no one is getting his annuity paid, so completely are we stripped to the bone by these nabobs who love war so much more than peace. The safe-conduct I thought I owed only to Budé and to you, and now Bérault and Brie are claiming a good part of the credit for themselves. Last but not least, I find I am also indebted to the cardinal of Lorraine;[11] and it is of course a pleasure to be indebted to him, but most of all to the king, who told Budé, I hear, with great glee that Erasmus would soon be in France. I hope I shall one day have the chance to make clear in my turn what I feel for so generous a prince.

Your lordship's support of a poor mortal like myself is most gladly accepted, and I will do all I can to avoid the risk of being thought ungrateful. A letter reached me at the same time from Dionysius Coronius,[12] a recipient of your bounty, and a very eloquent and polished letter it was too – one could recognize the faithful follower of Budé. I have no time to answer him just now, being kept busy by work of various kinds. My best wishes for your lordship's prosperity, most excellent prelate.

Basel, St Martin's Eve 1522

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[8] See Ep 1316 introduction.

[9] Cf Ep 1316 n7.

[10] See Ep 1273 n4.

[11] Jean de Lorraine (1498–1550), younger son of Duke René II of Lorraine. Jean was, from 1518, bishop of Metz and cardinal.

[12] Dionysius Coronius (Denis Corron), fl 1518–51, of the diocese of Chartres, was a protégé of Tournon, who apparently financed his studies at Paris and later took him into his service. From c 1543 until after 1551 he was professor of Greek at the Collège de France. His letter to Erasmus is not extant.

1320 / From Herman Lethmaet Ghent, 12 November [1522]

The autograph of this letter, first published as Ep 5 in Enthoven, is MS Rehd 254.97 in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław.

Herman Lethmaet of Gouda (c 1492–1555) had a brilliant career at the University of Paris, where he stood first on the list of DDs in 1520. With the help of letters of recommendation from Erasmus, he then joined the court of Charles V at the invitation of Jean de Carondelet (lines 8–11). In September 1522 Adrian VI made him canon at St Mary's in Utrecht (Ep 1350). In 1530 he became dean of St Mary's and in 1534 vicar-general of the diocese. In 1525 Erasmus wrote of having consulted him on theological questions (Allen Ep 1581:299–301) and praised him in the *Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem* (LB IX 788D). But this brief series of letters in 1522–3 (the others are Epp 1345, 1350, 1359) is the only surviving trace of communication between them.

You would hardly believe, dear Erasmus, most eminent of men, what an honour you have done me with your two letters of recommendation.[1] I will do my best, after being thus as it were goaded by you into activity, to make it clear one day to all men that you have spoken the truth at least to this extent, if in the future I am known, not of course for the man of whom you speak so very highly now, but for one who actively pursues that very same noble ideal which you tell me I must somehow strive to reach. You will make me entirely happy if you continue to honour me like this. It is to those same letters that I think I ought to be grateful for my present position at the court, which I was invited to accept in a most charming letter from the archbishop of Palermo, head of the emperor's privy council. Do dedicate to him, I beg you, either some production of your own which is due to make its first appearance shortly or one of the ancient authors who are to be reborn in your hands.[2] His name is Jean de Carondelet.[3] You are, I imagine, too familiar both with his own distinction and with that of his ancestors to need any details from me.[4] At all events he mentions you constantly in complimentary terms – nothing could be more so, and so do almost all the other courtiers, although in other respects they may be Philistines.

Into their society I have wormed my way, to tell the truth, readily

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1320

[1] Only one, Ep 1238, is extant.

[2] This request was promptly granted; Ep 1334.

[3] Ep 1334 introduction

[4] Erasmus was, in fact, less well informed on this subject than Lethmaet imagined; Ep 1345:50–3.

enough; and do you know why? I have my eye, of course, on the main chance; and if I can pick up something good, my idea is, dear Erasmus, to return to the Muses – though even now, in the very midst of court life, the Muses and I get on together very well. And if that hope of spoils deceives me, at least I shall most truly have achieved the precise result which was my second reason for following the court – to gain experience of the character, the objects and the nature of a court, and of the actual arts of court life. To such an extent am I really getting to know a great part of the world as well, the very thing I thought and hoped it would be possible to aim at in the court; for at court I thought one should be able – and one certainly is – to survey the world from a kind of lofty watch-tower far and wide in all its nations and its languages, great as it is. To such an extent do I also keep my eye on outstanding examples of the way important business is conducted. A single author, an Athenaeus or a Pliny, can supply a large proportion of a complete knowledge of the arts; and if the assemblies of men are a kind of books, living books, as indeed they are, a single court can furnish much the largest part of the immense body of knowledge concerned with the conduct of affairs. Breathes there the man who would not be attracted by such a splendid prospect – especially if, in addition, one were invited, and invited on complimentary terms, and invited by one who is a member of the supreme council, and in fact the head of the entire imperial court?

But never mind: suppose I am done out of all the good things I speak of. If only I can achieve thanks to the court one sole result, to be sent to England to conduct the business of this government, I shall never have any reason to regret what I have done; and in my opinion this should not prove difficult to achieve. It is a project to which I am surprisingly attached, for I wish to get to know the most cultivated court of a most cultivated king.[5]

Such, great Erasmus, is my plan. It is now your turn to consolidate my slippery youth with good advice. To speak frankly, you have a duty to perform for men of my age, for all of us I mean who have passed through the stage of growing up and reached that part of Pythagoras' letter[6] where there is a parting of the ways; and it is this. That is the stage at which you should from time to time call out the rhythm for our oars, as Ulysses did[7] (for you are the only true Ulysses of our time), this being by far the most perilous moment in all the questions, so difficult and diverse and intertwined, which face a man in the conduct of life – the moment when Lucian[8] was almost torn

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[5] Cf Ep 1313 n13.

[6] The Greek Y (upsilon). See Persius 3.56; Lactantius *Institutiones divinae* 6.3; Ausonius *Technopaegnion* 13.9; Jerome *Letters* 66.11, 107.6.

[7] Homer *Odyssey* 9:488–9

[8] *De somnio sive vita Luciani*; Erasmus' translation is in ASD I-1 472–87.

in two by education and inclination and Hercules himself by virtue and vice, as Prodicus tells us in Cicero.[9] I have often greatly admired that story, and now for the first time I begin to understand it, now that I have left the university and the path marked out for me by my masters, and have come to a stop at the fork, abandoned to my own devices and surprisingly uncertain which way to turn, until you give me some kind of indication which path I should now take. And this I beg and beseech you to do, as a suppliant before your sacred knees.

And so may Christ long preserve you unscathed for the benefit of us all and of all literature humane and sacred!

Ghent, 12 November
Herman Lethmaet of Gouda
Give my warmest greetings to Baer[10] and Beatus[11] and Glareanus.[12]
To Erasmus of Rotterdam, prince of the world of letters, in Basel

1321 / From Jan Becker of Borssele Louvain, 23 November 1522

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 11) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). Because the right-hand margin of the manuscript was badly worn, considerable restoration of the text was necessary in places.

Jan Becker (d 1536) was a native of Borssele, near Middelburg and Veere in Zeeland. He was educated at Louvain, where he taught for a time before departing in 1507 to spend most of the next decade as tutor to the nephews of Jérôme de Busleyden (Ep 205). Becker and Erasmus probably saw one another often at Louvain during Erasmus' residence there in 1502–3, and their acquaintance was renewed in 1517 (Ep 737). In 1518 Erasmus tried to secure Becker as the first professor of Latin for the Collegium Trilingue (Ep 805), but Becker chose instead to become dean of the chapter of Zanddijk or Zandenburg at Veere (Ep 849), a preferment he owed to the family of Adolph of Burgundy, heer van Beveren (Ep 93), who was now his patron.

Greeting. If you are well, best of teachers, I have every reason to rejoice, and so have thousands of other students who are most devoted to you. For my own part, I have been, rightly I think, intent upon my religious duties, and have refrained from interrupting you with a letter; for which there is no

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[9] *De officiis* 1.32.118
[10] Ludwig Baer (Ep 488)
[11] Ep 327
[12] Epp 440, 1264 n2

stronger reason than my wish, knowing how you are burdened with work that will benefit the whole world, not to break in upon you or disturb you selfishly, as I can easily guess is done every day by many people who cannot leave you alone. But my continual silence must not be taken as a sign of ingratitude, and so I have now decided to have at least a few words with you, that this letter may clear me of any suspicion of being ungrateful and forgetful, and yet that being brief it may not be tiresome. But I would not now dare to demand the book on the theory of preaching that you promised three years ago,[1] since I see you beset on all sides by so many and such bitter diatribes and critical comments that you are obliged to interrupt even the most religious and most important labours of criticism and composition which you had already undertaken. Let me however give you in a very few words an account of my affairs.

I have lived hitherto in my parsonage at Veere, where last year I was elected by the votes of all my colleagues to succeed the late dean of St Peter's at Middelburg; though I almost fought against it and was reluctant to accept, only that for good reasons the terms of that benefice appealed to me more. When I followed up that election, I found the whole imperial court against me, on account, they said, of an ancient privilege which empowers the emperor to appoint deans and provosts to vacant positions as well as abbots. And so with little difficulty, since I had no support – not even from my patron,[2] who was reluctant to let me go except to the extent of allowing me to take a small sum as an annuity – so being disappointed of that I stayed at Veere and began eventually to take on the duties of a tutor by setting out to teach the young son of the heer van Beveren.[3] When lo and behold, on the advice of certain people he was sent to Louvain for the sake of his health (which is very poor), not for the instruction, which he could get anywhere, but for the climate, which is thought to be very healthy. So we moved here at the end of September. We are Dorp's nearest neighbours,[4] for we live opposite his house. I spend my time, so far as my tutorial duties allow, in reading your most sacred expositions of the Scriptures and other religious authors. Just recently the heer van Beveren conferred on me the living that

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1321

[1] See Ep 932:18–22. Erasmus made a beginning with the work in 1523 (Epp 1332:41, 1341A:1334–8), but it was not to be published until 1535 as the *Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi.*

[2] Adolph of Burgundy; see introduction and line 29.

[3] Philip, not Maximilian as asserted by Allen; de Vocht *Collegium Trilingue* I 264 n5.

[4] Ep 1266 n2

used to be held by Nicholas of Burgundy,[5] provost of Utrecht, called Brouwershaven;[6] and he conferred it on me in my absence and with no approaches made either by myself or anyone else on my behalf, rejecting many other candidates for the benefice, so that my obligations to him increase as his generosity towards me increases.

If you ever write to Dorp or your other friends, add a word of greeting, if you can do no more, to an old friend who is most devoted to you. Farewell, dear Erasmus, best of men and scholars, and go on doing to the last day of your life what you have done for so many years now with great distinction to yourself and even greater profit to the Christian religion. This is the true fruit of the gospel, to do good to those who will not receive it and who even reply with ill will and calumny and persecution. I pray you may enjoy long life and most excellent health, and this not so much for your own sake (though it is for your sake too) as for humane and sacred studies, to the advancement of which you devote your whole life, attracted by no hope of reward except what only Christ can give you. And so I wish you prosperity, now and for very many years to come.

From Louvain, 23 November 1522
Your sincere friend Jan of Borssele

To the most eloquent and learned theologian of our age, Erasmus of Rotterdam, his most respected and revered teacher. In Basel

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1322 / From Jan Stercke Louvain, 24 November 1522

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 12) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

Jan Stercke (d 1536), of Meerbeke, near Brussels, was the first president of the Collegium Trilingue at Louvain, an office he held until his retirement in 1526.

Greeting. Although your man Hilarius,[1] the bearer of this, could act as a living letter from us to you and give you all our news, I hoped it would not be unwelcome if I also sent you this note to report that we are all flourishing in

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[5] Adolph of Burgundy's uncle (Ep 144)

[6] On the north coast of the island of Schouwen-Duiveland in Zeeland. This was Becker's compensation for the loss of the deanship at Middelburg (lines 22–8); de Vocht *Collegium Trilingue* I 266.

1322

[1] Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10)

this our College – your college, rather – of the Three Tongues,[2] and that everything about it grows more prosperous daily, so that there is nothing more you could desire, except perhaps larger lecture-rooms. This college will be honoured in the next few days by the arrival of two counts van Egmond,[3] who are to lodge here; the business is all arranged. When this was reported three or four days ago at some dinner where the theologians customarily gorge themselves, there was a long silence as though they were all astonished: this is how they congratulated us on such a success. There are inquiries too from other nobles of the highest rank who want to come here, but there is no room. All the same, if you decide to pay us a visit, we shall easily find room for you; for master Conradus,[4] who now occupies the room once designed for you,[5] will gladly move back to his ancient dungeon.[6] Glapion,[7] about whom we were in doubt for a long time whether he were alive or dead, has died in Spain; it is now definite. We hear of no moves against you, but the attitude of the theologians towards you is haughty. The rest Hilarius will tell you. Farewell, our glory and our great upholder. From Louvain, 24 November 1522

Your humble servant and dependant Jan Stercke of Meerbeke

To the distinguished theologian Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his patron

1323 / To Archduke Ferdinand Basel, 29 November 1522

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this letter is addressed to the brother of Emperor Charles, Ferdinand of Hapsburg (1503–64), archduke of Austria and, during his brother's prolonged absences from the empire, imperial viceroy. At this time Ferdinand was in Nürnberg attending a meeting of the imperial diet (November 1522–February 1523). Ferdinand's reply is Ep 1343.

The present letter had a dual purpose. First, and most obvious, it was a letter of recommendation for an old friend, Jakob Spiegel (lines 34ff) of Sélestat.

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[2] On the current state of the young foundation, see Ep 1221.

[3] Joris (d 1559) and Filips (d 1529) van Egmond, two of the younger sons of Count Jan III of Egmond (d 1516). The two young counts matriculated at the university on 6 December 1522 and stayed for some time at the Trilingue. Joris entered the church and eventually became bishop of Utrecht. Filips died while studying in Italy.

[4] Evidently Goclenius (Ep 1257)

[5] That is, a room at the Trilingue. As Ep 1296:17–18 shows, Erasmus preferred to retain his old lodgings at the College of the Lily.

[6] The College of the Lily

[7] Ep 1275

Spiegel (c 1483–after 30 June 1547), who was the nephew of Jakob Wimpfeling (Ep 224), had studied law, entered the imperial chancellery, and become one of Emperor Maximilian's secretaries. He sought Erasmus' friendship as early as 1515 (Ep 323) but the two did not meet until 1521 at Strasbourg (Ep 1342:232–4), by which time Maximilian had died (1519) and Spiegel had entered the service of Charles v. The warm praise bestowed by Erasmus in this letter helped Spiegel secure employment from Archduke Ferdinand, in whose service he remained until his retirement to private practice in Sélestat in 1526.

The second purpose of the letter is not so obvious. Although there is no mention of it in the text, it was evidently Erasmus' intention that Spiegel, in presenting the letter, should request from Ferdinand an imperial privilege for Froben (Epp 1344:123–46, 1353:253–65). For some reason, the letter did not reach Nürnberg until the beginning of February 1523 (Ep 1344:130–2 and notes), probably at the same time as Ep 1341, in which Erasmus solicited the aid of Pirckheimer in the matter of the privilege for Froben. Contrary to Erasmus' expectation (Ep 1341:21–2), Spiegel was not in Nürnberg (Ep 1344:132–3), so it was Pirckheimer who delivered the present letter to Ferdinand and who successfully presented Erasmus' petition on behalf of Froben.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO FERDINAND, BROTHER OF THE EMPEROR CHARLES

Respectful greeting, most serene Prince. I must not long delay your Highness when you are so fully occupied with so much important business; but you will remember, I suppose, that Erasmus whose book *De principe*[1] you rendered more precious even to me as its author by deigning to read it.[2] At the moment I ask nothing of you except that, if I deserve it, you should maintain your old good will towards me, especially in these days when all is in turmoil as never before. Nor do I ask this for any other purpose except that under your protection liberal studies and the gospel teaching in all its force may daily grow in strength more and more among those who profess the name of Christians. For I have no wish for preferments or for stipends, being content with the humble position and the modest portion that are mine; but I do thirst for the glory of Christ, of which your Highness is no less a supporter than myself and can do far more to promote it. I at least, with

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1323

[1] The *Institutio principis christiani* of 1516. Erasmus described the second edition of 1518 as having been undertaken on behalf of Ferdinand, who at the age of fifteen was just entering upon his career in government; Epp 853:67–9, 1341A:1550–1.

[2] Epp 943:23–4, 970:25–6, 1009:57–8

unsullied loyalty and a clear conscience, have laboured to promote it so far to the best of my ability.

In these last months I have dedicated to your brother, the invincible emperor Charles, a paraphrase on Matthew,[3] which I undertook on the insistence of Matthäus, cardinal of Sion,[4] and the emperor with his habitual kindness wrote most courteously to tell me that he highly approved of my work.[5] I now have in hand a paraphrase on John[6] which I have been encouraged by many people to attempt, but particularly by the cardinal of Mainz[7] and by that excellent prelate John, bishop of Rochester in England,[8] a man of incomparable holiness and learning, on the ground that this gospel contains more obscurities than the others, not only by reason of the sublime and heavenly themes of which it treats but also because the language is full of riddles which complicate the sense. This labour, such as it is, I have decided to dedicate to you; for you not only profess the teaching of the gospel, as we all do, but you have a great desire to understand it, and study to express it in your life and character. And the shining example which you set will, I hope, find more men to follow it, if your piety and your religious interest in Scripture become more universally known.

The bearer of this letter, Jakob Spiegel, was secretary to your paternal grandfather the emperor Maximilian, to whom he gave most loyal service which was highly valued. He is an elegant scholar with a felicitous style, and besides these gifts is a passionate and effective student of the Gospels. I would recommend him to your Highness, did I carry any weight myself or were he the sort of man to need any such recommendation; for I know that he will be most acceptable on account of his own merits, which have in fact already commended him to Maximilian, a prince who was a keen judge of men. Your serene Highness can promise yourself that your Erasmus will render any service which a lowly but loyal dependant can provide. May Jesus Christ the Almighty long preserve you in health and wealth, and may he prosper your counsels for the good estate of the commonwealth and for the glory of God.

Basel, 29 November 1522

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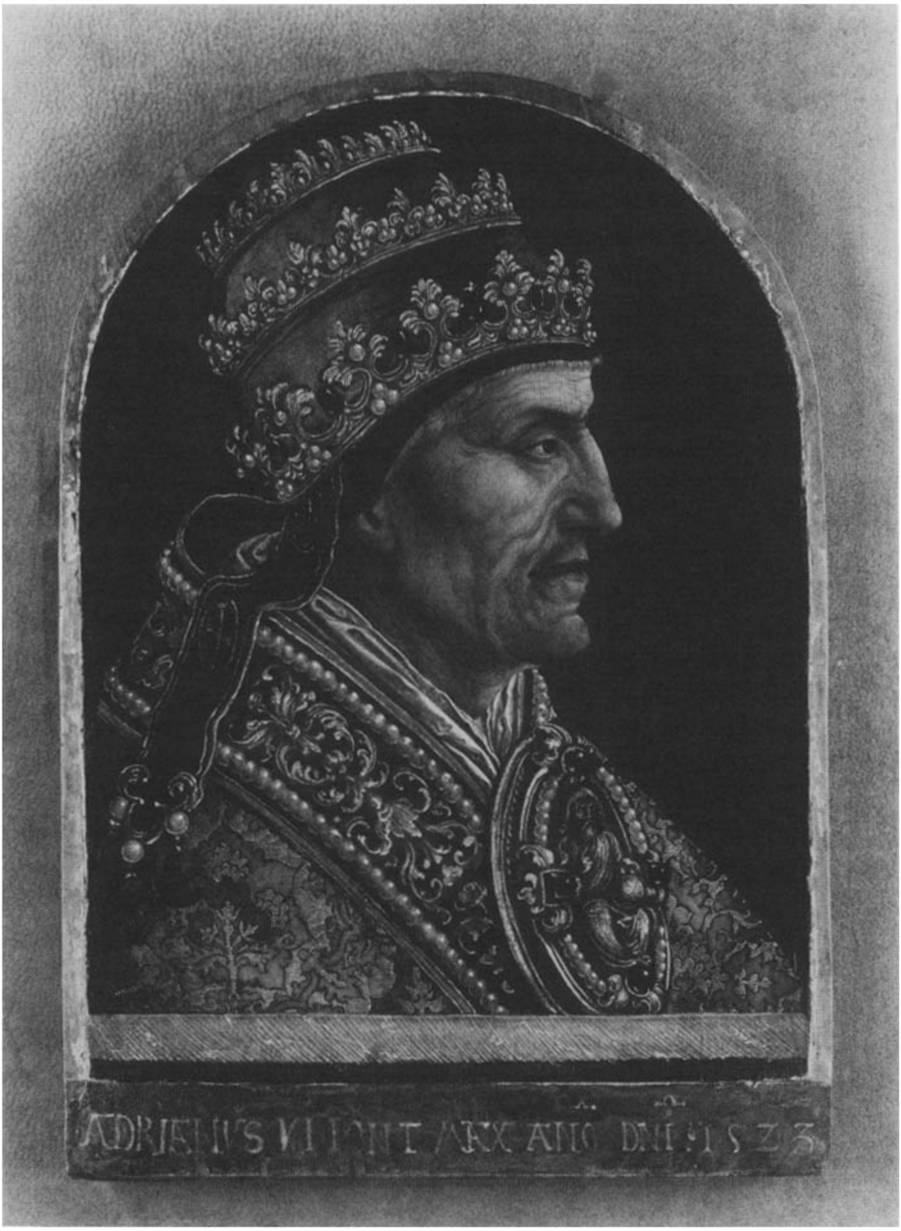
[3] Ep 1255
[4] Ep 1255:27–31
[5] Ep 1270
[6] Ep 1333
[7] Epp 1299 n10, 1308:23–4
[8] Ep 1311 n9

1324 / From Adrian VI Rome, 1 December 1522

For a year or more after Pope Adrian's election (9 January 1522), Erasmus anxiously sought some sign of the new pontiff's sentiments toward him, sending feelers via Barbier (Epp 1294, 1302) and approaching Adrian directly with the edition of Arnobius (Ep 1304) and its accompanying letter (Ep 1310). Despite their old friendship and Cardinal Adrian's encouragement of Erasmus' studies, Erasmus feared that his detractors in Rome and elsewhere might succeed in turning the essentially conservative, non-humanist Adrian against him (see Ep 1304 introduction). In the autumn of 1522 there were rumours that Adrian was dissatisfied with the Arnobius, that he had already pronounced Erasmus a heretic, and that he had publicly condemned Erasmus' books (Zw-Br Ep 246:19–20; Ep 1342:685–7, and Allen Ep 1518:24–9). It is not clear exactly when the present letter, with its unmistakable evidence of the pope's good will, reached Erasmus. It was sent to Brabant before being delivered to Basel (Allen Ep 1518:30–1). On 22 December Erasmus still had not received it (see Ep 1329 introduction). That it is mentioned in Ep 1341 but not in Ep 1337, both addressed to Willibald Pirckheimer, indicates that it reached Erasmus sometime between 8 and 28 January, perhaps delivered by Fabri (n13). Understandably, he was much relieved and greatly pleased (Epp 1341:30–2, 1345:17–20). Erasmus henceforth liked to call Adrian's letter the *Breve aureum*, boasted of it, and frequently cited it against his adversaries (see Aleandro's comments to this effect in Allen Ep 2638:34–5).

The basis of Allen's version was MS 1324 f 57 in the Librije (Town Library) at Gouda, a manuscript which, he conjectured, had been derived from the original letter received at Basel. The first printed edition, published with the *Exomologesis* in March 1524, contains numerous variants, some of which Allen incorporated into his text and all of which he appended in the notes. Far more significant are the numerous and lengthy variants in a draft of the letter in the Vatican archives (Cod Vat 3917 ff 16–17), which has corrections in what appears to be Aleandro's hand. The existence of this manuscript supports Aleandro's later claim (Allen Ep 2638:34–9) that the *Breve aureum* was his 'offspring' and that his draft was more generous in its praise of Erasmus than the version actually sent. Aleandro's claim in turn suggests that Adrian, finding the first draft by Hezius (see line 137 and Ep 1339) insufficiently warm (Ep 1342:698–704), may have dictated the substance of what he wished to say (Epp 1341:31–2, 1345:18–19) to both Hezius and Aleandro, charging each to draft a suitable breve, and finally accepting Hezius' second version. Allen included the most important variants in Aleandro's draft in his notes to the Hezius text. We have chosen rather to print Aleandro's entire draft as Ep 1324A (pages 209–14 below).


ADRIANVS VI PONT MAX ANO DNI 1523

Pope Adrian VI
Ascribed to Bernart van Orley
Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hannover

POPE ADRIAN THE SIXTH TO HIS BELOVED SON ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Beloved son, greeting and apostolic benediction. We have read and reread your letters with great satisfaction, one written to us in your own hand and the other printed in front of the commentary of Arnobius in which you dedicate your work to us. The letters delighted us, both because they came from you, whom we have always valued highly for your outstanding erudition, and because they gave evidence of exceptional devotion to ourselves and to the religion we profess. As regards Arnobius, although the press of serious business has not yet permitted us to read him, we are convinced by the hasty soundings we have made in him so far, by his venerable antiquity and the subject of which he treats, and last but not least by your recommendation, that he cannot be other than a valuable author. When you say in your letter[1] that you fear lest some men's enmity and malicious gossip may have made us suspect you of a connection with the party of Luther, we wish to put your mind at rest in this regard. For though, to tell the truth, we have received reports on this subject from two or three persons perhaps who are not very well disposed towards you,[2] yet by nature and on principle, and also in accordance with the pastoral office which we hold, we do not usually lend a ready ear to information reaching us to the discredit of learned men who are noted for their holiness of life; for we perceive that the more excellent the learning which we know to be theirs, the more exposed they must be to the tooth of envy.

The affection however which we feel for you and the concern we have for your reputation and true glory prompt us to urge you to employ in an attack on these new heresies the literary skill with which a generous providence has endowed you so effectually; for there are many reasons why you ought properly to believe that the task has been reserved by God especially for you. You have great intellectual powers, extensive learning, and a readiness in writing such as in living memory has fallen to the lot of few or none, and in addition the greatest influence and popularity among those nations whence this evil took its rise; and these gifts you ought to use for the honour of Christ, who in his most generous munificence endowed you with them, and the defence of Holy Church and of the faith. And we have this particular reason for desiring you to do so, that in this the best of all ways you may silence those who try to fasten suspicion on you in connection

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1324

[1] Ep 1310:29–38

[2] See Ep 1330:53–60.

with the business of Luther, and may crown the labours you have devoted for so long to the assistance of the humanities and the correcting and enriching of the Scriptures by this most sacred undertaking, than which none can be more pleasing to God, more welcome to true Catholics, or more worthy of you and of your gifts, your learning, and your eloquence.

Do not expect, moreover, that you will ever be given a more apt opportunity of doing God a greater service or conferring a more fruitful benefit on your own nation or indeed on the whole of Christendom than you have now: you have only to take the heresies, as stupid and boorish as they are godless, not so much invented by Martin Luther as inherited from heresiarchs of former times (who have often been condemned by the Catholic church and by the holy Fathers under the unquestionable inspiration of the Holy Spirit) and by him as it were newly unearthed from the depths of hell, which daily, sad to say, subvert the souls of so many of your brethren and fill the world with criminal confusion – these you must take and, following the example and the praiseworthy zeal of your own master Jerome and of Augustine and all the other holy Fathers, you must confound them, abolish them, explode them by all the powers of reason and all the authoritative texts of Holy Scripture. And indeed, Erasmus, you have many publications to your credit hitherto, marked by admirable zeal and great success; but however great the service they have rendered to the learned world, when compared with the task to which we now invite you, and which the agreement of all godly men urges you to undertake, they might well seem of less immediate value. For they are useful to the learned only; but this, with God's blessing, will redound to the general peace and tranquillity of all Christian people, which is in our day almost the only purpose of the teaching of the gospel.

This being so, Erasmus our beloved son, you, who from boyhood to your present time of life have risen as it were through all the stages, and have always made some advance for the better with all your powers in every subject you have touched on by reasoning and by writing, must not hold back any longer in this field, so uniquely adapted to your learning, your holy calling, and your years; for while you have the same vivid energy as a writer, your judgment is far more mature and the range of your knowledge far wider. Nor could you reasonably decline this task by maintaining, perhaps from some deeply ingrained modesty, that you are unequal to it. Apart from the fact that this is contrary to common knowledge and to the truth of the case, you will be supported in these efforts by God, whom you serve in so doing, and by a most righteous cause, that of the faith, which has always proved victorious over the craft and assaults of heretics, and will no doubt be so again, although God in his most righteous judgment, on account of the enormous crimes of men and especially of churchmen, allows the vessel of his church to be somewhat hard put to it in these stormy waves.[3] Can we suppose that this same God of ours will now desert his spouse the church, which he purchased with his own precious blood[4] and promised that he would be with her until the end of the world,[5] and will not confound instead those men who are not afraid to set up their proud and perverse understandings against the knowledge of God[6] and against the Catholic truth? – for whom, as Peter the apostle says, 'judgment for long now does not linger, and their destruction does not slumber.'[7] And the prophet says in the psalm, 'I beheld the ungodly exalted above the cedars of Lebanon, and I passed by, and behold, he was not; I sought him, and his place was not to be found.'[8]

And this, we have no doubt, will shortly befall Luther also and his accomplices, unless they repent. Carnal men themselves and contemptuous of authority, their aim is to make all others resemble them. Can you then refuse to sharpen the weapon of your pen against the madness of these men, whom it is clear that God had already driven out from before his face and manifestly abandoned to a reprobate mind,[9] that they might say and teach and do what is not right? By them the whole church of Christ is thrown into confusion, and countless souls are involved together with them in the guilt of eternal damnation. Arise therefore to bring aid to God's cause, and employ your eminent intellectual gifts to his glory, as you have done down to this day. Remember that you are placed in such a position that through your labours and with God's help a great part of those who have been subverted by Luther can return to the true path; those who have not yet fallen may remain upright; and those who waver and are near to falling can be preserved from giving way.

How pleasing this will be to God, and what a joy to all true Catholics, you can easily see for yourself. You ought also to bear in mind those words of the apostle St James in which he declares that the man who turns back his brother when he is wandering from the truth and recalls a sinner from the error of his ways saves him from death, and for himself covers a multitude of

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[3] Ep 1344 n10
[4] Acts 20:28
[5] Matt 28:20
[6] Cf 2 Cor 10:5.
[7] 2 Pet 2:3
[8] Ps 37 (Vulg 36):35–6
[9] Cf Rom 1:28.

sins.[10] For our part at least it cannot be expressed how welcome such a thing would be, if as a result of your efforts those who are infected by that horrible heresy were to repent of their own accord, rather than wait to be smitten by the censor's rod of the church's canons and the laws of the Empire. How foreign this would be to our own nature you yourself, we are sure, know well enough from the time when we lived together in Louvain in the sweet freedom of sacred studies and in what was still private life.[11]

Such is the urgent request we make of you in our great desire for the salvation of the flock entrusted to us and for the peace of Christendom; and if you are willing to increase its value by agreeing to something more, do, once the winter is past and the air of Rome, which has been suffering from the plague for some months now,[12] is clear again, do come to us as soon as you can, but come in good health and spirits. Your arrival will give the greatest pleasure both to us and to all the friends whom you have here. You will be much helped also in this task, which you are as much bound as able to undertake, by the large supply of books in our possession and by frequent discussion on these subjects with godly and learned men. We in our turn will do what we can and that soon, with Christ's blessing, to see that you have no reason to regret this journey and this most pious labour;[13] as our beloved son master Johannes Fabri,[14] a zealous man and a good scholar who is your very good friend and a great champion everywhere of your reputation, will make clear to you at greater length by word of mouth or in writing; to whom we would ask you to give as much credence as you would to ourselves.

Given at Rome at St Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman in the

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[10] James 5:19–20

[11] See Ep 1304 n2.

[12] There was an outbreak of the plague in Rome in the period September–December 1522. Adrian, who insisted on staying in Rome, himself suffered an attack of fever in the third week of September. At the date of this letter, all but one of the cardinals had fled; Pastor IX 100–6.

[13] Erasmus later stated (Ep 1341A:1681–3) that Adrian had offered him, doubtless orally through Fabri (see the following note), 'an honorific ecclesiastical preferment' (cf Ep 1345:19–20) and a gift of money, both of which he declined, apparently in the missing portion of Ep 1352.

[14] See Ep 1260 n22. Fabri returned to Constance from Rome in the late autumn (end of November at the earliest) of 1522; see Ignaz Staub *Dr. Johann Fabri, Generalvikar von Konstanz, 1518–23* (Einsiedeln 1911) 177–8, n81; Rublack 212–13, n44. It is more than likely that when Fabri went to Zürich in January 1523 to attend the First Zürich Disputation, he included a visit to Erasmus at Basel on his itinerary; BAO no 142.

year of our Lord 1522, the first day of December, being the first year of our pontificate

T. Hezius[15]

1324A / From Adrian VI Rome, c 1 December 1522

This is Aleandro's draft of an alternative version of Ep 1324. For details, see Ep 1324 introduction.

Beloved son, etc. We have read and reread your letters with great satisfaction, one written to us in your own hand and the other printed in front of the commentary of Arnobius in which you dedicate your work to us. The letters delighted us, both because they came from you, whom we have always valued highly for your outstanding erudition, and because they gave evidence of the highest devotion to ourselves and to the religion we profess. As regards Arnobius, although the press of serious business has not yet permitted us to read him through, we expect none the less that an author cannot be other than excellent who is commended by his venerable antiquity, by the subject of which he treats, and last but not least by Erasmus. When you say in your letter that you fear lest some men's enmity and malicious gossip may have made us suspect you of a connection with the party of Luther, we wish to put your mind at rest on this score, not only because your name has been reported to us in this regard less often perhaps than you suspect, but also because by nature and on principle and, we might add, in accordance with the office which we hold, we do not usually lend a ready ear to information reaching us to the discredit of learned men; for we perceive that the more excellent the learning which we know to be theirs, the more exposed they must be to the tooth of envy.

One thing we cannot possibly deny, that not only we ourselves but all other men have long been greatly surprised that you have not yet brought your fertile pen to attack these new heresies, since on many grounds there is universal agreement that you are almost the one person for whom this task seems to have been reserved by heaven. You have great intellectual powers, extensive learning, and a readiness in writing such as no one else in living memory has enjoyed; furthermore you have great influence and popularity among those nations from which this evil took its rise. If you do not use these gifts for the honour and defence of him who by his kindness alone endowed you with them, take care lest by ingratitude towards your

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[15] See introduction and Ep 1339.

Redeemer you do not both confirm the suspicion you so much resent, and also waste the labours you have devoted so long to the enrichment of the humanities and the correction of religious texts. For waste you undoubtedly will the harvest of your intellectual gifts, if these rustic heresies are given a footing. For how else are we to describe these monstrosities which Luther's party after so many centuries unearths from hell, if not as damnable delusions of Waldensian rustics?[1] These heresies are the more dangerous, inasmuch as they are tricked out with the false colours of a meretricious kind of style and filled with the corrosive poison of invective, and thus more rapidly deceive simple minds, which have a natural bias in favour of listening to calumny, and arouse them to the spreading of hatred and the stirring up of sedition among the people of God, a situation which is all too evident. Were these to remain unpunished, not only the humanities, for which you have done so much, but all other sciences must inevitably either perish altogether or suffer the most grievous loss; for the Doctors of the church, the sacred councils, the laws both canon and civil, and the whole of philosophy are by these profligate renegades despised and undermined.

It is true, Erasmus, that you have already many publications to your credit, marked by admirable zeal and great success; but compared with those which remain to be written and which are unanimously expected of you, they are altogether of small account or at least are less necessary, as being published for the benefit of the learned few. These other writings look rather to the general peace and tranquillity of all Christian people, which is in our day almost the only purpose of the teaching of the gospel. It is well

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1324A

[1] The Waldensians (also known as Vaudois) were followers of Peter Valdes (Waldo), a twelfth-century itinerant lay preacher from Lyon who denounced the wealth and worldliness of the church, preached poverty, simplicity, and strict morality, and undertook to make Scripture available to the public in vernacular translations. After Valdes was excommunicated in 1184, he and his followers organized a separate church which ordained its own priests, placed great emphasis on preaching, and rejected as unbiblical such things as purgatory, prayers for the dead, the veneration of saints and relics, several of the sacraments, and special status for the priesthood. Waldensian teachings spread throughout southern France and into Spain, northern Italy, Germany, Bohemia, Poland, and Hungary. As a result of fierce persecution beginning early in the thirteenth century, the Waldensians survived only in the mountain valleys of Savoy and Piedmont and in Germany and eastern Europe. In Bohemia, Waldensians were often mistaken for Hussites (see Ep 1260 n32). In the sixteenth century the Waldensians established friendly contact with Luther and other reformers. In 1532 those in the alpine valleys formally allied themselves with the Swiss reformed churches.

known that from boyhood to the present time, through all the stages of your life, you have constantly enriched every subject you have touched on, both by the arguments you have devised and the works you have written: what do you suppose men will think and say about you if they now see you holding back in a matter where you have an obligation to respond because of your years and your holy calling, and especially since the vigour of your writing remains as great as ever, your judgment has gained in maturity, and, as one might expect, the range of your knowledge is much wider than heretofore? Nor is there any reason for you to say that you are unequal to this task or inferior to Luther; for the story that you said so, although in our judgment false, and invented by very wicked men wishing to make their cause respectable by the use of your name, is none the less circulating in print. Apart from the fact that such a claim would be inconsistent with what you and everyone else knows, and inconsistent too with the truth of the case, you would also be showing yourself in some degree opposed to the righteous cause of the faith, which elsewhere overcomes in the end all attacks upon it open and secret. Could you ever think of any slanders with which to assail the Christian religion more outrageously, or any greater tribute with which to bolster up the false and self-destructive reasoning of the heretics, than to confess yourself inferior to Luther's party in scholarship or style? For many are convinced that once the rumour is put about of your writing against them, they will collapse in a moment. As it is, they go about proudly with their crests held high, some of them boasting of you as their leader, maintaining that everything is done on your advice and in fact that anything they have is drawn from you as the fountain-head; some saying that you would never keep silence on these points, on which hinges a great crisis in the church, unless you approved of what they write, seeing that even the very smallest blemishes of language are more than you can tolerate in Holy Scripture, though these at least have been made endurable by lapse of time and force of habit in the church. But you will confront all these evils with little effort, and will instantly dispel the cloud of suspicion that has gathered in men's hearts as a result of your prolonged silence if, as soon as possible and in all seriousness, you direct all the energy of your intellect and of your pen against those who throw Christian charity into chaos and equally cast a slur on your good name. Once you have done this, we do not doubt that Luther's supporters will be moved by your honeyed eloquence, by the sound and lively reasoning which you will bring into play, and most of all by your authority, and will readily return to the flock of their Redeemer, which they have basely deserted, led astray by an evil spirit, and which they are trying with all the craft at their command to scatter and drive over a precipice. You can readily see for yourself what a welcome encouragement this would be to us and how preferable to correcting them by the censor's rod of the laws. For remembering as you must how much more inclined we were to mildness than to severity in the days when we enjoyed the delightful freedom of study and what was still private life, you ought to reckon that this merciful spirit of ours has not been weakened or changed by increasing years and by our pastoral office, but increased. And so it is with a great longing for the salvation of the sheep entrusted to us that we urge you, beloved son, and beseech you in the Lord to undertake at last this office, which is so acceptable to God and to men, so worthy of you as a Christian and a theologian, and so welcome to us above all. For although many distinguished minds have worked on this before now and not without success, yet all consider that it is you who will, as they say, set the coping-stone upon the work, if you once take it in hand. And if you are anxious to increase the value of what we desire so much by adding something more, do come to us as soon as you can, but come in good health and spirits. And as for the task which we propose and which you are as much bound as able to undertake, you will be much helped by the large supply of books in our possession and by frequent discussion on these subjects with us and with very many other godly and learned men. We for our part will do what we can to ensure (and soon too, we hope) that you have no reason to regret this journey and this most pious labour; for the labourer, as the divine pronouncement runs, is worthy of his hire.[2] Given at Rome.

1325 / To Duke George of Saxony Basel, 5 December 1522

The manuscript of this letter is in the same volume in the Staatsarchiv Dresden as that of Ep 1283 (Loc 10300) and was first published in the same place. On the background to the letter, see Ep 1313 introduction.

Greeting, most illustrious Prince. Since your Highness does not answer my letter,[1] I suspect that it has never reached you. Were I inclined to suspect that you were offended at the liberty I took in writing, your singular and well-known kindness would make that impossible, especially since you yourself invited me to write. This suspicion of mine is increased by Heinrich Eppendorf,[2] who is afraid that the servant by whom he had sent it may have

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[2] Luke 10:7

1325

[1] Ep 1313

[2] See Ep 1283 n4.

been intercepted or some other misfortune may have befallen; which for his[3] sake I should much regret. For I find him a young man fully worthy of all the favours fortune can bestow, and he never tires of singing your praises. And so I send a copy of my earlier letter, in case it fell by the wayside.

I will add nothing at this time, except that I am with my whole heart your illustrious Highness' humble servant, whom I pray that Jesus Christ the Almighty may long preserve to us in health and wealth.

Basel, 5 December 1522

Erasmus of Rotterdam, your serene Highness' devoted servant, signed with my own hand

To the most illustrious Prince George, Duke of Saxony etc

1326 / To Heinrich Stromer Basel, 5 December 1522

Heinrich Stromer (1482–1542) was a professor of medicine at Leipzig when he became personal physician to Albert of Brandenburg, archbishop of Mainz, in 1516 (Ep 578 introduction). In 1519 he entered the service of Duke George of Saxony and subsequently returned to Leipzig, where he became dean of the medical faculty in 1523. He was in Basel at the time of Erasmus' death, perhaps as attending physician.

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HEINRICH STROMER
THE PHYSICIAN, GREETING

Honoured sir, 'many the friendships silence hath dissolved,'[1] so let me at least send these lines to greet my dear Stromer, and to assure you that your memory has not yet faded from my mind nor ever shall. What has happened to Petrus Mosellanus?[2] I long to know; for he had written to me at length about his coming here,[3] and since then I have not heard a word about him. He had also written to say that the most illustrious Duke George intended to give me a royal present[4] – that was the word he used. I certainly neither deserve nor expect a gift from that prince – not that I am a keen hunter of gifts from any quarter[5] – but if he has something in mind, I should be sorry if

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[3] Ie, Eppendorf's

1326

[1] *Adagia* II i 26

[2] Ep 1305

[3] See Ep 1305 n1.

[4] There is no mention of this in Ep 1305.

[5] Cf Ep 1341A:1655–1774.

the generosity of that excellent prince were to come to naught, both for his sake and my own. Farewell.

Basel, 5 December 1522

1327 / To Huldrych Zwingli Basel, 9 December 1522

This letter (=Zw-Br Ep 256) is Erasmus' reply to Zwingli's letter (now lost) replying to Ep 1315. The autograph is in the Staatsarchiv Zürich (E.II.339:88). It was first published by Hottinger (see Ep 1315 introduction).

Greeting. It is like your generous self, my dear Zwingli, to take my zeal for your welfare in good part. But the advice I give to many people is a waste of time. I could easily stomach other men's rashness if it did not weigh heavily on humane studies and on men of good will and on the cause of the gospel. In their misguided efforts to support it, they do it harm, so much so that anyone who wished to snuff out Christ's teaching could not do more to help. Another piece of nonsense,[1] utter rubbish, has appeared about the pope. If the author had put his name to it, he would have been raving mad. As it is, he has put out his trash anonymously, which is as insipid as it is dangerous. If all Luther's party are like this, I wash my hands of the whole lot of them. I never saw anything more mad than this foolish stuff. If the depths of winter did not tie me here, I would move anywhere rather than be forced to listen to such trumpery.[2] Farewell, my dear Zwingli, and maintain the cause of the gospel with prudence and with courage.

Basel, morrow of the Conception 1522
Your sincere friend Erasmus
To Huldrych Zwingli, parish priest of Zürich

1328 / From Guillaume Budé Paris, 14 December [1522]

First published in *Budaei epistolae* I (Paris: Bade 1531), this letter is apparently an answer to the one of Erasmus mentioned in Ep 1319:2.

On Budé and his extensive correspondence with Erasmus, see Ep 403 introduction.

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1327

[1] Zwingli's anonymous *Suggestio deliberandi super propositione Hadriani pontificis Romani Nerobergae facta* ..., published at Zürich by Froschauer c November 1522; see Zw-Br Ep 256 n1. Erasmus' reference to the same work in Ep 1331:59–60 indicates that he had a good idea who its author was. Thus this letter in fact continues and reinforces the sharp criticism of Zwingli begun in Ep 1315.

[2] See Ep 1319 introduction.

BUDÉ TO ERASMUS, GREETING

Thank you for your congratulations; your kindness ensured them a ready welcome though not a cheerful one. You describe me as promoted to a most honourable position[1] and speedily relieved at the same time of serious ill health; but you must, I suppose, have derived this news from some rumour which was as false as rumours usually are – as though it were possible that ill health which has been chronic for eighteen years[2] and is now rooted, I might say, in my vitals, could be finally cured in a man of studious habits, not to say a man of my age. That I have been given a post which is honorific and pretty lucrative I do not deny, for the king is really generous; and it is an office which my friends and men of good will and lovers of the humanities wanted for me and in some spirit of prophecy had earmarked for me long ago, that humane studies might now be able to take a front seat and make themselves heard from the platform both here and abroad, maintaining their proper dignity as though from an exalted position. Such a thing it is to deliver one's opinion in the city and in the highest courts of the land and to show one's mettle in the councils of the court, and at the same time to be as closely attached to so great a prince as one's gifts allow. For the duties of this office have a wide scope and offer even more to me personally, inasmuch as I already had the entrée to inner circles at court when an approach had seemed desirable.

But to prevent me from making my mark in this position I have a new form of ill health, offspring I suppose of that ancient trouble I have cursed so often, for this year a kind of acrid phlegm mixed with bile has begun to descend into my bowels, and there sets up such griping pains with severe vomiting that no one would dare any more to promise me a life of some length or at least make that seem likely now. And here you are, congratulating me on the departure of my illness when one like this has taken its place! When I got your letter, I was well and truly on the rack, protesting loudly, though I have as little self-pity as anyone. The next day I opened it and read it with the greatest enjoyment, so far as my lamentable state permitted. What I call the next day was today. So now what I want more than anything else is to be allowed with the king's kind permission to live a city life in

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1328

[1] Budé had been a royal secretary since the 1490s, but during the years of his greatest scholarly productivity he had not actually functioned in that office. In 1519, however, he returned to active service at court. In 1522 the king made him one of the eight 'masters of requests in the royal household,' ie, a magistrate of the Parlement. He was sworn in on 21 August. Budé provides a fuller account of the duties of a master of requests in Allen Ep 1370:57–103.

[2] Budé's estimates of the duration of his illness tended to vary; cf Ep 1073:6–8.

future, which means making me my own master again, at least to some extent. For this new office of mine is a half-and-half affair, the duties of which oblige a pair of colleagues to be at court for a quarter of the year only. Such conditions of work are just what I hope for, or rather, demand, for my declining years and poor health, as a great kindness and a second promotion. But I cannot really persuade the court to accept the reasons for giving me leave of absence; for my outward appearance gives a highly deceptive idea of my constitution and lends no support to my demands and protests, which has always deprived my complaints and excuses of any weight.

When you say in your letter that you have expressed your thanks for the king's safe-conduct,[3] I have not yet discovered what this refers to. For a second safe-conduct was sent you as well, and what happened after that I do not know. Lately it so happened that I was on court duty in this city while the king was here on a long visit,[4] and this I found very convenient. I hope this activity will count as part of my official duties, just as though his retinue were living abroad. The king is a supporter of your reputation, for he has had some of your works translated into our vernacular, and reads them often; he told me so himself the other day. Apart from that, what Konrad[5] told you about the Greek lexicon[6] I myself neither accept nor deny. It had at one time come into my mind, but the labour of the writing put me off. In the way I had begun, it was an enormous task; not that the working up of the material is more than I can now manage, but there is such a range of subject-matter, at any rate after the labour of taking notes which I completed long ago. For I have started on a great many things, up to the point where I might perhaps not have to work very hard to finish them; but they are scattered around in disorder all over the place, and after my death will be very little comfort to my successors.

To ensure that I can find no spare time for this, on top of my duties at court, I have been made provost of the merchants of this city,[7] an office

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[3] See Ep 1319 n6.

[4] The court was at Paris from 29 November through 22 December 1522; see *Catalogue des actes de François Ier* ed Paul Marichal (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale 1888–) VIII (1905) 438.

[5] Probably Resch (Ep 1319 n2), who had published a Greek lexicon in July 1521 (Bietenholz 348, no 3016), and who was perhaps now contemplating a new edition

[6] Erasmus had urged Budé to produce a Greek lexicon; Ep 1233:179–85. Cf lines 106–9 below.

[7] The *prévot des marchands* of the city of Paris was supposedly the most important crown officer in the city government. Budé served one two-year term,

which suits me about as well as the army or business would go with a literary life. For over four months this has already deprived me of reading time and peace and cheerfulness, so that with the pressure and the fatigue of these unaccustomed problems I have already had enough; and in the mean time this city has been practically emptied by the exodus of citizens taking refuge from the plague,[8] which rages here, while I and a few of my colleagues have been obliged by the duties of our office to stay on here, so that on very few days in the last three months, as opportunity offered, have I been able to spend a night on my country estate at Saint-Maur, to which I had sent my household. Besides which, the post of master of requests, which is the office I have lately been given, after having previously been appointed prefect of the royal library,[9] a position which has not much less in the way of advantages (and I find that for me these two offices do not clash) – this post, as I say, requires different interests, as foreign to those I started with as litigation is to those who love a merry life and the books written by our professors are to those with a love of good writing.

Both these offices were given me by the prince in my absence, so let no man think me a successful place-hunter or greedy for power. The first of them had summoned me from home and involved me after all in the retinue of the court. But when I had seized an opportunity to return home and pay a longed-for visit to my family,[10] the king sent me my letters of appointment to the mastership from Lyon,[11] which is not only a pretty lucrative post but very much sought after, and the lawyers at court actually intrigue for it, though all this time I have had no one to put my claim either by arrangement with me or of his own accord. With the appointment I got also a letter from the prince addressed to me, which showed and set forth his real and true generosity and his continued good will towards myself. Of the eight members of the board, one, who also held a bishopric, had died at court unexpectedly and on his return from an embassy.[12] After that, I went to

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beginning on 16 August 1522. That he was seldom in Paris during that period suggests that he was only a figurehead.

[8] Cf Ep 1342:1128

[9] The office of *maître de la librairie du roi* was created especially for Budé. Nothing is known of the duties involved.

[10] Early in June. Budé was still in Lyon on 3 June; Louis Delaruelle *Répertoire analytique et chronologique de la correspondence de Guillaume Budé* (Toulouse 1907; repr New York n d) nos 137–8.

[11] The court was at Lyon most of the time throughout June and until 23 July; *Actes de François Ier* (see n4) VIII 437.

[12] Jean Caluau, bishop of Senlis, who died at court in June, soon after returning from an embassy to Switzerland

court to express my gratitude to the king (and the court meanwhile had moved nearer,[13] which saved me a long journey) and also to take the legal oath as is usually done (for until then the practice is that no pay is issued to new entrants on office), and then returned to the city to be admitted to a seat on the supreme court,[14] having first bound myself there too by the same oath; when, lo and behold, the day before my arrival news reached me of the offer of this position in the city,[15] which was made with public acclamation, though it was the last thing I expected, and I am not sure that it is a good idea. For there I discovered and ran head on into an Iliad, as they call it, of abuses and troubles.[16] But I could not refuse the honour, though it was an awkward and difficult moment, and I wanted to refuse, against the authority and orders of the prince, who arrived in the same city himself soon afterwards.[17]

So you cannot hope to get anything out of me for the common cause of good literature, much less for the compilation of a lexicon, though there is nothing anyhow that I would more cheerfully, willingly, and readily take on if I had the time.[18] Later on perhaps I shall see what it would be right for me to contribute, as best I can, if providence gives me rather more generous treatment, as I so much hope, and at the same time if this age we live in permits, which I fear will one day distinguish itself by a disastrous war. Please God I may be wrong! Farewell.

Paris, 14 December

Deloynes[19] came to see me, and he read your letter. He said he had had one from you on more or less the same subject,[20] to which he will soon send an answer. Farewell once more, O benefactor of good letters beyond precedent.

1329 / To Adrian VI Basel, 22 December 1522

This letter was first published with the *Exomologesis* (see Ep 1310 introduction), where the editor noted that Erasmus had sent it before he received Ep 1324. Pope Adrian's reply is Ep 1338.

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[13] The court left Lyon on 23 July and proceeded via Roanne (24 July) and Blois (4–15 August) to Paris (18 August); *Actes de François Ier* (see n4) VIII 437.

[14] Ie, the Parlement of Paris; see n1 above.

[15] See n7 above.

[16] *Adagia* I iii 26

[17] Ie, Paris, on 18 August; see n13 above.

[18] In 1529 Budé did finally publish his *Commentarii linguae graecae* (Paris: Bade).

[19] See Ep 494.

[20] Not extant

TO HIS HOLINESS ADRIAN VI FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Most blessed Father, I send you for the second time, by the public courier of the city of Basel, a token of my devotion to yourself and my active loyalty to your see, in case the book I sent some time ago has not reached you.[1] At that time I had nothing else in hand; should a more promising opportunity present itself, I shall not fail to do my duty. Nothing can be more stormy than the times we live in, in which it is most difficult to satisfy everyone. I at least have satisfied my conscience hitherto, and hope to defend my record even before Christ. Nor is the tempest of affairs always the same: conflicting weapons, opinions, ambitions, factions, hatred tear everything to pieces. The world looks to you alone to restore tranquillity to the affairs of men.

If your Holiness instructs me, I will make so bold as to give you an outline in a secret letter of my own proposal,[2] unwise it may be but at least loyal, for putting an end to this evil in such a way that it will not easily sprout again. Not much is gained by suppressing it by brute force in such a way that it soon breaks out again in more perilous form, like the scar of a wound that has not healed. In a violent storm the master of a ship, however great his experience, will listen to advice from anyone. Nor did Moses reject the counsel of Jethro[3] – not that I am a Jethro, but Davus in Horace gives loyal advice to his master.[4] If there is anything in it worth having, it can be made use of; if there is nothing, it will be known only to us two, and there will be no risk in suppressing it. We humble folk see and hear perhaps some things that are not to be despised, which escape the notice of men in high places.

First then, my view is that we must not allow some men's private resentment to bring public mischief on the world at large, and on Christ's cause; and we must maintain the authority of men only so far as will not compromise the authority of Jesus Christ, who alone is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.[5] In my day I have written with some freedom,[6] for this was then encouraged by the peaceful state of things, and I never suspected the rise of times like these. But now – now that I see Christendom brought into great peril, we must above all be on the look-out and allow absolutely no scope to individual feelings. I have no desire to be a prophet of evil; but I see

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1329

[1] Arnobius; see Epp 1304, 1310. Ep 1338:3–6 indicates that both copies reached the pope.

[2] See Ep 1352 introduction. For earlier ventures in the same vein, see Epp 1267 n6 and 1275 n7.

[3] Exodus 18

[4] *Satires* 2.7

[5] Heb 13:8

[6] In the *Moria* and other satirical works. Cf Ep 1007:85–7.

more peril threatening than I could wish, and more than many men perceive. May Christ turn it all to a happy outcome!

This city of Basel, so richly endowed and so flourishing, is drawn by a special devotion to the Holy See for many reasons, but particularly on account of the council that was held here long ago.[7] It therefore deserves, in my opinion, to be favoured by your Holiness, especially as its request is neither unfair nor burdensome.[8] I have been asked to add this, though it was quite unnecessary. If your Holiness will deign to test my loyalty, give me what task you will, and unless my obedience is prompt and cheerful, do not count the name of Erasmus among your servants. May the spirit of the Lord Jesus guide your heart and all your undertakings towards the salvation of the world and the glory of God.

Basel, 22 December 1522

1330 / To Jakob Ziegler Basel, 22 December 1522

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Jakob Ziegler, see Ep 1260. On the intervening correspondence, see n5.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JAKOB OF LANDAU IN BAVARIA

Though always excessively busy, I have never been busier than I am now; but none the less, when the magistrate of this republic told me that he would be dispatching a special messenger to your part of the world,[1] I took your preface,[2] which contains your skirmish with Zúñiga,[3] and read it through without drawing breath. I will not thank you just now, dear Landau, for your feelings towards me; I wish I could repay them. I salute, more than I can say, your fertile and gifted mind and a vein of expression equal to your gifts; and this makes me the more indignant with that noisy crew of blockheads whose rascality means the dragging down into this sort of quarreling of minds born for better things. What's more, though further from envy than from any other fault, I am positively jealous of Zúñiga,

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[7] The Council of Basel, 1431–49

[8] The purpose of the appeal to Rome is unknown.

1330

[1] Cf Ep 1329:3–4.

[2] The reference is to Ziegler's *Libellus* (Ep 1260 n50), which bears the subtitle *In quatuor Evangeliorum perpetuam historiam prologus, cum Erasmianae traductionis defensione*. The *Libellus* has no preface by Ziegler; it is itself a preface or prologue to a continuous narrative of the Gospels intended for later publication.

[3] Ep 1260 n36

believe it or not, for rousing your pen to write like this. Personally, I have regretted over and over again that I ever touched that contagious wretch, and I am resolved henceforward to put up with anything rather than give tongue against him.[4]

Both your letters,[5] you must know, have reached me; if I did not answer the second, there was no reason except my lack of leisure, which is beyond belief. A good share of my time is claimed by my health, which lets me down from time to time; and for the rest, the publishing of my books means so much labour that Hercules twice over could hardly cope with it.[6] On top of this there are so many letters from all directions that this business by itself would be more than I could manage, however hard I try. Your mistake was to me a very great blessing, since it produced such a long and eloquent letter; for I was not consulting you whether Zúñiga should receive a reply; I was dropping you a polite hint that you should write nothing in the way of an attack on him, since this would merely stir up a hornets' nest. This is just what that swashbuckler thirsts for: to be made famous, no matter how, in what many people write; and he deserves much more to be hounded by the doggerel of penny poets like a donkey in a swarm of bees.

What would you like to be done with your book? – you give no indication. Nor could I make out from it whether you have read the defences in which I have replied on two occasions to Zúñiga,[7] and shortly thereafter to Carranza.[8] For I suppose they have been conveyed to your part of the world by Claudio the bookseller.[9] I could not guess adequately what arrangement you had followed in your book; for one thing, that brother[10] of yours who copied it out made many mistakes in spelling. Whatever you may decide about this piece, let me urge one thing: if you ever wish the work you have started on the narrative of the four Gospels to see the light of day,[11] do not let Zúñiga's name defile either that or any other work that you think will live. What gain would there be in that? To make him ashamed of himself?

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[4] Cf Ep 1312 n5.

[5] Ep 1260, Erasmus' answer to which is lost; and another letter, not extant, to which Erasmus had not yet replied

[6] Erasmus was now working on a new edition of the *Adagia* (January 1523), the paraphrase on St John (Ep 1333), the edition of Hilary (Ep 1334), and the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A).

[7] See Epp 1277 n1, Ep 1260 n45.

[8] See Ep 1277 n8.

[9] Unidentified

[10] Martin Richter of Redwitz, Ziegler's secretary and 'frater adoptatus'; see Schottenloher *Ziegler* 35, 62, 100, 102, 397.

[11] See n2 above.

You could sooner make a boulder blush. To make him mend his ways? He is past praying for. To show the world that a monster has been born? No result could be more welcome to him, could this come his way.

And if it is Rome that has produced a lunatic to attack me openly, I made a good guess at the standard of integrity of some men in that city, nor is it concealed from me who put him up to do this, though libel comes to him naturally and he was born to act this part. Moreover, if that elderly cardinal called of Santa Croce, his fellow-countryman,[12] accepts the man and honours him with his society, what can one say except that the cover is worthy of the cup? From the high priest I like to hope for better things;[13] at any rate, as far as I am concerned, I know that certain men who hate me have been disappointed so far. There are three Furies among us who from hatred of the humanities stir up all this sorry business, Jacob of Hoogstraten,[14] a Dominican, Vincentius[15] of Alkmaar of the same society, and Nicolaas Baechem,[16] a Carmelite. And there is a man one might well add to their number, who is the more dangerous because he does everything in secret and makes good use (very bad use, rather) of other men's lunacy.[17] Hateful as they are to all men of good will, and daily becoming more so, these characters have been a great help to Luther's faction.

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[12] Bernardino de Carvajal (Ep 239:55n)

[13] Adrian VI. For Erasmus' apprehensions about the new pope, see Ep 1304 introduction. Ep 1324, with its good news about Adrian's attitude, had not yet reached Erasmus; see the introduction to that letter.

[14] Ep 1299 n25

[15] Vincentius Theoderici; see Epp 1196 introduction and 1263:29–30.

[16] Ep 1254 n6

[17] Note the similarly worded references in Epp 1301:231, and 1302:83–8. Allen, citing Schottenloher *Ziegler* 62, suggested that the unnamed fourth Fury was perhaps Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11). The suggestion is plausible if one focuses solely on the passage in Ep 1302 describing the man in question as someone whose character, agreeable 'when he was still in a junior position,' had been deformed by greed and ambition. There are, however, at least two good reasons for thinking that Erasmus was referring to someone other than Aleandro. First, all three references in the letters strongly indicate that the unnamed adversary was someone present in Louvain, either a member of the theological faculty or someone closely associated with it. But by the time Erasmus wrote Ep 1301 he knew that Aleandro had long since departed for Spain (Ep 1271:68–71). Second, the present letter strongly implies that the unnamed ally of Baechem et al was an enemy of the humanities, which Aleandro certainly was not. There was, however, such a person in Louvain: Jacobus Latomus (Ep 934:4n), who fits Erasmus' description in all other respects as well. He and Erasmus had had friendly relations while Latomus was still a junior academic at Louvain (LB IX 79D, 82F), but in 1519 Latomus had

As to my coming to Rome, it is no use your putting forward reasons. There is one counter-argument with more truth in it than I could wish: my advancing years, my physical weakness, and on top of that stone in the kidneys,[18] a fatal disease with which I am now all too familiar. What you tell me to do with your letters I have always done hitherto, and will so continue.[19] Athanasius in a Latin version by Reuchlin I will send you by this courier if I can get a copy,[20] and also my *Apotheosis* of your friend Reuchlin.[21] Johann Froben is devoted to you, and sends you his best wishes. Farewell.

Basel, 22 December 1522

1331 / To Johann von Botzheim Basel, 25 December 1522

On Botzheim, see Ep 1285. This letter was first printed in the *Opus epistolarum*. Botzheim's reply is Ep 1335.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANN VON BOTZHEIM, GREETING

Today your letter[1] of 14 November was delivered to me by the university people. There was no need to take all that care in handing over so small a present[2] to so great a prelate,[3] especially as there was nothing in it that

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attacked the humanities and, by implication, Erasmus himself (so the latter thought) in two published dialogues (see Ep 934 introduction). More recently, Vives had reported that Latomus' success in his pursuit of the favour of the Croy family had caused him to put on airs and made him unpopular with his colleagues (Ep 1256:86–9). Vives also reported that Latomus and Baechem were circulating 'wicked falsehoods' about Erasmus (ibidem lines 27–8). Latomus' avoidance of Baechem-like public attacks on Erasmus would explain the references to his dangerous habit of working in secret. Finally, Erasmus' motive for suppressing Latomus' name would presumably have been his hope for a détente in their relations; in both the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A:831–8) and the *Spongia* (ASD IX-1 158:893–4), Erasmus states that he had always tried to deal sparingly with Latomus in the hope that the latter would desist from his attacks.

[18] Ep 1267 n5

[19] Ie, to burn them; see Ep 1260:307–9. But Erasmus had not burned Ep 1260.

[20] Reuchlin had translated two of his works: *In librum Psalmorum* (Tübingen 1515), and *De variis quaestionibus* (Haguenau 1519).

[21] See Ep 1311 n15.

1331

[1] Not extant

[2] According to Allen, this apparently refers to the *divinatio* of Ep 1335:3, which Botzheim had evidently given to the bishop (see n3) on his own responsibility.

[3] Hugo von Hohenlandenberg, bishop of Constance

properly concerned him. I will use other means, given the opportunity, of showing my devotion to his Highness. Nor will this be a pretence; it will be done from the heart, nor do I hope for anything out of him except good will on both sides and a common enthusiasm for the gospel cause which is the concern of all alike, and which that excellent bishop supports, I do not doubt, as far as the state of things permits. My paraphrase on John I have reserved for Ferdinand,[4] the emperor Charles having testified in a letter[5] he actually wrote me how pleased he was with that on Matthew;[6] though I learned that not only from him but from many other men's letters: Gattinara,[7] his high chancellor; Glapion,[8] the Franciscan (who could do whatever he pleased with the emperor while he lived); the bishop of Palencia,[9] who has also died; Joris van Halewijn;[10] Antoon Sucket,[11] the most fair-minded man of our generation; Jean de Carondelet,[12] archbishop of Palermo – not to mention others who are private friends.

Those who expect to carry the same weight in Christ's business, which is the concern of every nation and of every century, that they do in theological wine-parties and petty scholastic disputations are very wide of the mark. It is a mighty and unconquerable thing, is truth; but it must be deployed with a wisdom learned of the gospel. Such is my hatred of dissension and my love of concord that I fear, if it came to the point, I should abandon some portion of the truth sooner than disturb the peace, always assuming there is something I can do. That preacher of yours,[13] at any rate, the worthy man, will prove to have done more for the gospel cause, of which we are all supporters beyond a doubt, if he joins the wisdom of the serpent in the gospel[14] to his dovelike innocence. Let him make the experiment, and reject my advice unless he finds it true. What our deities are up to, whether

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[4] Ep 1333
[5] Ep 1270
[6] Ep 1255
[7] Answering the letter mentioned in Ep 1281:2
[8] Evidently in reply to Ep 1275
[9] Evidently in answer to Ep 1273
[10] Ep 1269
[11] Not extant. Antoon (I) Sucket (d 1524) of Mechelen studied law and rose under the patronage of Jean Le Sauvage (Ep 301:38n) to be a member of Charles of Hapsburg's privy council in 1517. As one of the executors of Jérôme de Busleyden's estate (Ep 884:5n), he played an important role in the founding and management of the Collegium Trilingue. Erasmus' high opinion of him is expressed in Epp 1556 and 2191.
[12] Answering Ep 1276
[13] Johann Wanner (Ep 1335 n5)
[14] Matt 10:16

the inner circle or the lesser fry – though of this too I get reports at length from various places – it is not for me, a member of the lowest walk of society, to pass judgment on. For myself, I shall play my part in this play, to be sure, with all my heart; the outcome must be left to Christ, who is our producer.

I am glad you found my letter[15] a pick-me-up; but it surprises me that you people in Constance can catch such a fell disease from so flimsy a rumour.[16] Were I of the same mind, who am a product of Holland[17] and not Constance and have falsehoods of this kind brought me every day, I should have expired long ago. Let me tell you this: those two theologians who used to vent their private spite not on me, for I had never said a word against them, but on the humanities, which I had always defended, have never been better behaved than they are now.[18] In all this Pope Adrian was their last resort; and now that he has failed them, they are much cast down. They lay the blame for this on a certain theologian who is devoted to me,[19] though we are quite unknown to one another, who can do what he likes (so they say) with the pope. A pope who from genuine principle forwards the business of Christ will have my support in every possible way, so far as my minuscule talent will reach. Nor have I any doubt that, being as he is an old man and a scholar and a man with great experience of affairs, he will answer our expectations. If he should fail us at any point, I at least shall not go in search of strife.

Now for that last small question from your preacher: Must we abandon the whole gospel? In the first place, no one abandons it more thoroughly than its incompetent defenders. Then, think how slowly Christ revealed his teaching! yet what could be more mad than some of those who now wish to be taken for champions of the gospel? I have warned a friend[20] not unknown to you about that letter of the bishop of Constance that is so much discussed;[21] and now there appears a piece of nonsense far more crazy than

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[15] Not extant

[16] Perhaps the rumour that Adrian had declared Erasmus a heretic (Zw-Br Ep 246:20); cf Ep 1324 introduction.

[17] Ie, thickheaded, dull; *Adagia* IV vi 35

[18] An apparent reference to Zúñiga (Ep 1260 n36) and Carranza (Ep 1277 n8). The publication of Zúñiga's *Erasmi blasphemiae et impietates* had been banned by Leo X, by the college of cardinals, and by Adrian VI; Ep 1312 n4.

[19] Apparently Hezius (Ep 1339), whose signature is appended to Epp 1324 and 1338

[20] Zwingli

[21] Zwingli's *Apologeticus Archeteles* (see Ep 1314 introduction) replies point by point to a letter addressed to the Zürich chapter by the bishop of Constance. Cf Ep 1315.

anything.[22] I cannot conceive what they have in mind or what they are aiming at.

Cronberg has talked with me twice,[23] and I greatly liked his modesty and good sense. Hutten I have not seen,[24] nor do I wish to see him just now.

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[22] See Ep 1327 n1.

[23] Hartmuth von Cronberg (1488–1549), an imperial knight whose ancestral estate was at Kronberg im Taunus, northwest of Frankfurt am Main. An early convert to the Reformation, Cronberg wrote a number of pamphlets in support of it in the years 1521–3. In 1522 he made common cause with his father-in-law Franz von Sickingen (Ep 1342 n33) in the abortive Knight's Rebellion, as a result of which he was deprived of his property at Kronberg. In the autumn of that year he visited Basel, where he had two interviews with Erasmus (Ep 1342:766–7), and in September 1523 he settled with his family in that city, his misfortunes having left him unperturbed in his loyalty to the Reformation.

[24] Ulrich von Hutten (Ep 365), whose turbulent career as poet, pamphleteer, ardent German nationalist, hater of the papacy, champion of the free imperial knights, and violent supporter of the Reformation was drawing to a close. Forced to flee Germany because of his desperate 'war on the Romanists,' which involved a good deal of highway robbery and blackmail, Hutten, destitute and already terminally ill with syphilis, arrived in Basel toward the end of November 1522, departing again for Mulhouse (Mülhausen) on 18 January. In Basel, Hutten moved in the circle of reformers around Oecolampadius, who were annoyed by Erasmus' opposition to Zwingli and thus to the whole Reformation as they understood it (Epp 1314, 1327), an opposition that they attributed to cowardice and fear of the loss of income from Catholic patrons (cf Epp 1342:707–19, 799–806, 1348:34–40, and Allen Epp 1384:20, 1459:80). Meanwhile, Erasmus' affection for Hutten, for years his close friend and comrade in the battle against the enemies of languages and good literature (Epp 365, 611, 951, 986, 999), had since 1520 been increasingly strained by Hutten's persistent efforts, beginning with the unauthorized publication of Ep 1033, to prod Erasmus into open support for Luther (Epp 1135, 1161). When Hutten arrived in Basel, Erasmus sent greetings and protestations of continued friendship, but declined to receive a visit from him. Of the several reasons which he later gave for this (Ep 1342:760–6, Allen Ep 1496:6–13, *Spongia* ASD IX-1 128–9), the most important was probably the fear that a visit from Hutten would have been misunderstood by Erasmus' Catholic patrons, including those at the imperial court, as a defection to the 'Lutheran' faction, something which would have deprived Erasmus of his unique mediating role in the religious conflict. Erasmus clearly expected that Hutten would, as a friend, understand the need for discretion, as did Melanchthon later in similar circumstances (Allen Epp 1452:16–18, 1466:20, 1496:3–5). He was thus genuinely surprised and hurt when Hutten, interpreting his action as a breach of friendship by someone who had already betrayed the Reformation for base reasons, launched a bitter attack upon him (see Epp 1341A:1019ff, 1356, 1378–9, 1384, 1388–9). For a thorough analysis of the Basel incident and the subsequent controversy, see Kaegi 461–514.

I wish him well with all my heart, if he would give himself a chance. I have other things to take my time. I wrote at the same time to you and to Fabri.[25] Beatus is still away.[26] Eppendorf rarely comes to see me;[27] otherwise he is much the same. Please give my greetings to all my friends, especially the physician[28] (to whom I have never returned thanks although, as the Greeks say, I have forgotten nothing), your preacher the Dominican,[29] and Hummelberg.[30] I should be glad to know the names of the physician and the preacher.[31] May your patronesses the Graces grace with success all that you do or say. May you ever be a pleasure to your friends, and they to you, and take your part with the Graces in the Muses' choir. This answers most of your points, but I write soon after dinner, when Bacchus is my inspiration rather than the Muses.

Christmas Day 1522

1332 / To Christoph von Utenheim Basel, [early January?] 1523

Christoph von Utenheim (c 1450–1527), member of a noble family of Lower Alsace, was educated at Erfurt and Basel (doctor of canon law, 1474). He became a canon of the Basel chapter in 1475, coadjutor for the ageing bishop in 1499, and bishop in 1502. Although he proved to be an ineffective administrator of his diocese, Christoph's genuine devotion to ecclesiastical reform and humanist scholarship endeared him to the humanists of Alsace and Switzerland. His generous hospitality to Erasmus during the latter's second visit to Basel (1515–16) inaugurated a lifelong friendship (Epp 412–14), and Christoph's influential presence at Basel was doubtless one factor in Erasmus' decision to settle there in the autumn of 1521. Erasmus' *Epistola de esu carnium* (Ep 1293 n8) was addressed to him, and the *De immensa Dei misericordia* (1524) was dedicated to him.

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. The tentative nature of the remarks concerning the new pope (lines 34ff, 69ff) indicates that Ep 1324 had not yet arrived, hence the approximate month-date (cf Ep 1324 introduction).

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[25] See Epp 1260 n22, 1324 n14.

[26] Beatus (Ep 327) was at Sélestat on business. Hutten had visited him there in November; ASD IX-1 130–1 (*Spongia*).

[27] See Ep 1283 n4.

[28] Johann Menlishofer (Ep 1335 n10)

[29] Evidently Antonius Pyrata (Ep 1342 n97)

[30] See Ep 1253 n6.

[31] Botzheim misunderstood this request for the name of the Dominican preacher (see n29) and supplied the name of Wanner (n13 above) instead; see Ep 1335:48–9. In Ep 1342:433–6, Erasmus evidently still did not know Pyrata's name.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CHRISTOPH, BISHOP OF BASEL

I have been toiling continuously at my researches,[1] from which, as you know, I never take a holiday, and have been distracted by several other pieces of business – not to renew just now my old complaints of ill health,[2] and of the affliction which has now been my companion for too long.[3] All the same, I wanted to comply with your request, for there is no man living whom I would more readily gratify; and so I ran through the book you sent me[4] – for I cannot say I read it properly. In the treatise on the position and duties of bishops, many people will perhaps be put off by the simple style and inelegant language; for in these days hardly anything is saleable unless it also breathes all the perfume of the Muses. Apart from that, your Carthusian author does not lack abilities, and his language, though not entirely Latin, is clear. As far as the second work is concerned, however, with such an abundance of subject-matter – for Gospels and Epistles, prophets, every book in both Testaments in fact, have so much to say about pastoral duties – I thought the author inadequate; and his obscurity too would have interfered with the popularity of his book, even had he somehow discovered a skill in handling to match the richness of the material. In any case, many things which he repeats from the revelations of St Bridget as though they could be taken seriously will raise a smile nowadays, I am quite sure, with every educated reader; such are the principles of human credulity.

The book by the bishop of Beirut,[5] whom I once knew,[6] is not unscholarly, but smacks too much of canon law. On this ground I am sure that nowadays at any rate it will be unpopular with the majority; though apart from that it is thin and undistinguished. Consequently one is not likely to find anyone ready to print it at his own risk. But if your lordship would

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1332

[1] See Ep 1330 n6.

[2] See Ep 1256 n2.

[3] See Ep 1267 n5.

[4] According to Allen, this was apparently a volume, possibly in manuscript, containing two works by the Carthusian Dionysius Riker, also known as de Leeuwis (1402–71): *De vita et regimine praesulum*, and *De vita et regimine curatorum*. The revelations of St Bridget (line 20) are cited in both.

[5] Jean Briselot (d 1520) of Valenciennes in Hainault, suffragan bishop of Cambrai, titular bishop of Beirut, prior of the Carmelite house near Valenciennes, and confessor to Prince Charles. He left numerous theological works in manuscript. The work in question appears to have been on the same subject as those by Dionysius Riker.

[6] And did not like; Ep 597:2–16

prefer to take the risks of printing on yourself, it would not be a good plan for me to add a foreword to the work, on account of the various suspicions of both parties: Luther's people would grumble that I was supporting the cause of the papacy, and the other side would suspect that I wished to criticize prelates and priests. In both factions passions run so high that I would not wish to be more deeply mixed up with a business that is sure to end in subversion. I wait to see which direction our new pope's energy and interests will take. If he appears to set Christ always before him, I shall back him to the utmost of my power – if there is anything that can be done by a poor creature like myself.

I have decided to stay here until March,[7] for that is imperatively necessary; but I shall not be idle all that time. Besides other things, I have edited St Hilary's works at the cost of great efforts,[8] and if Christ grants me the strength, I shall finish a book on the principles of preaching,[9] which I promised long ago and am frequently asked for in letters from that best of prelates, John, bishop of Rochester,[10] who appeals to our ancient friendship and his unfailing and continual support of me. There will be other things as well.

That repeated phrase in your letter, 'Your servant, who is not his own master,' made me very unhappy as I read it. I suspect that your lordship is tormented by ill health, and on this ground the thought of you truly becomes dearer to me, though I would rather it were more agreeable; for it is a true saying that mutual affection is sometimes roused by shared misfortunes.[11] In any case, I am worthy of greater troubles than I suffer from, but a man of your high character deserved unbroken ease. But such is the law of our humanity: whether we will or no, our frail frame decays and this poor dwelling-place of ours must crumble. Though this is not so serious for men like you, my Lord Bishop, men whose holiness of life ensures that their spirit is always strong in Christ, to whom Paul wishes to be more closely joined and to be freed from the burden of the flesh.[12] This life of ours, however agreeable our lot may be, what is it but a moment when compared to eternity? Though apart from that there is nothing in it that should make one wish it longer, except to prolong the chance to help as many people as one can.

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[7] See Ep 1319 introduction.

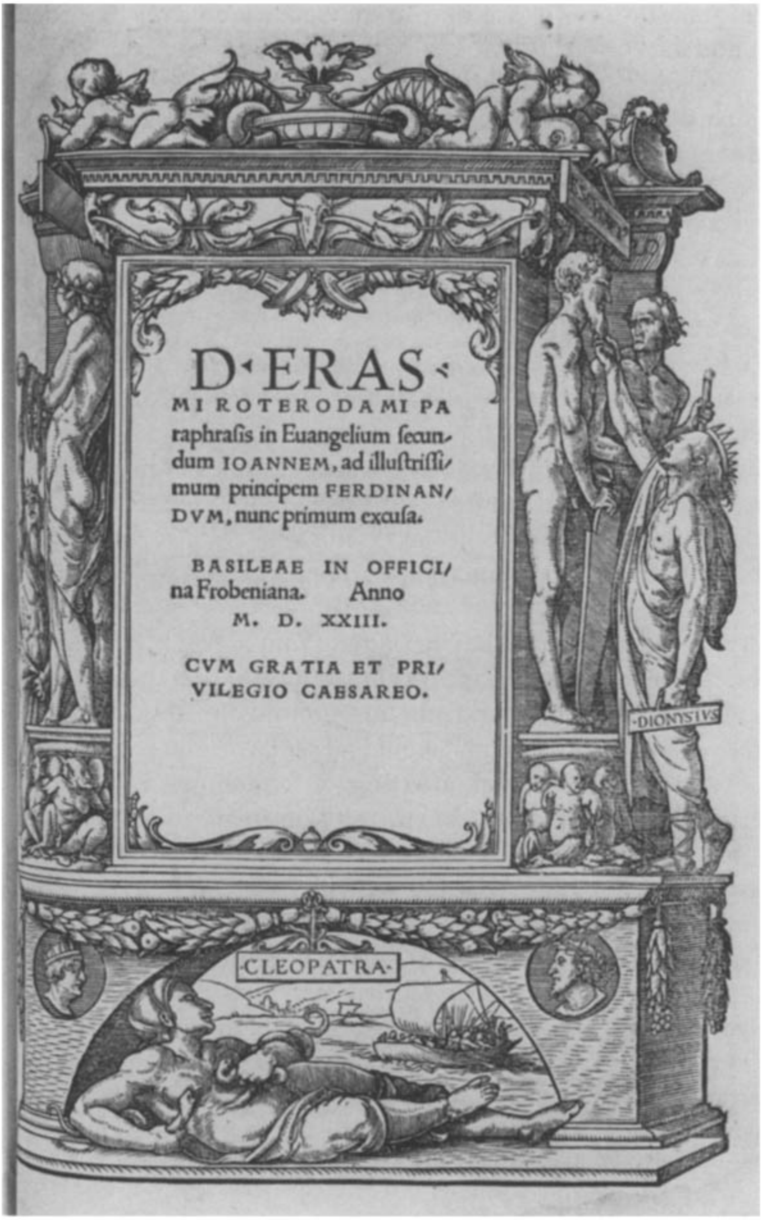
[8] Ep 1334

[9] See Ep 1321 n1.

[10] See Ep 1311:20 and n9 to that letter.

[11] *Adagia* II i 71

[12] Phil 1:23, Rom 7:24


DIONYSIVS
CLEOPATRA

D·ERASMI ROTERODAMI PAraphraſis in Euangelium ſecundum IOANNEM, ad illuſtriſſimum principem FERDINANDVM, nunc primum excuſa.

BASILEAE IN OFFICINA Frobeniana. Anno
M. D. XXIII.

CVM GRATIA ET PRIVILEGIO CAESAREO.

Erasmus *Paraphrasis in Ioannem* title-page
Basel: Froben 1523
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, University of Toronto

I send your lordship a copy of Luther's book *De quatuordecim spectris*,[13] which has been very well received even by those who cannot stand his teaching at any price. He wrote it before things had reached their present pitch of lunacy. And I only wish that man could have been recalled to moderate counsels by the advice of his friends as easily as he has been infuriated by their passions. But if there is anything evil in this too, you are wise enough to pick the gold out of the dunghill.

I know the new pope's character and qualities well, actually from personal acquaintance.[14] Nor do I doubt that he will set much to rights in the way the church behaves, the excessive liberty in dispensations, and the vast accumulation of benefices. He will lay down rules for what clerics can properly wear, he will not stand those who are openly criminal, he will compel them to say mass frequently. All these things have their place as regards the outward appearance of religion; whether the force of true piety is rooted in them, I am not sure. He will command universal obedience thanks to the authority of the emperor, whose interests will be the principle of his pontificate. The cardinals, even those who at heart wish him ill, will hide their feelings and put up with him until he has established the royal authority of the Roman see, which is now somewhat decayed. After that, he cannot live long, and his successor will have things all his own way. I have of course no wish to abolish the primacy of the see of Rome; but I should wish to see it conducted on principles which will give a lead to all who strive after the religion of the gospel, just as for some centuries now the lessons to be learned openly from its example have been entirely contrary to the teaching of Christ. Farewell, best of prelates.

From Basel, 1523

1333 / To Archduke Ferdinand — Basel, 5 January 1523

This is the preface to Erasmus' paraphrase on St John, first published by Froben in February 1523. An unbound copy was presented to Archduke Ferdinand at Innsbruck at the end of April (Allen Ep 1361:12–21). Erasmus later sent a properly bound copy (Allen Ep 1376:14–16). Ferdinand sent one hundred florins in acknowledgment (Ep 1341A:1738–41).

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[13] Ie, the *Tessaradecas consolatoria pro laborantis et onerantis* (1520); WA VI 104–34. The fourteen sections of the book are presented as 'images' (*spectra*), seven of evil and seven of good. Originally written to console Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony during an illness, the *Tessaradecas consolatoria* was an appropriate gift for the ailing bishop. Erasmus mentions the work with approval once again in Ep 1341A:1231–2.

[14] See Ep 1304:12–13.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE FERDINAND,
ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA, BROTHER TO THE EMPEROR CHARLES,
FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

When I undertook last year to make a paraphrase of St Matthew's Gospel,[1] most honourable Prince Ferdinand, it was more on the authority of his Eminence Matthew, cardinal of Sion,[2] than from any resolve of my own, partly because the very grandeur of the work inspired a certain awe that deterred my mind from approaching it, and partly because I was in any case fully conscious of my own inadequacy, and there were many difficulties of different kinds to dissuade me from the attempt. I then thought that in this class of composition I had done all I ever should. And yet, I know not how, the success of my earlier rash venture and the authority of great men,[3] whose wishes it would be most discourteous in me not to comply with and whose commands it would be wicked to disobey, have brought me once again to the point of writing an exposition of the same sort on St John. I was aware that his grand theme is even more majestic, being mainly concerned as it is with the exposition of those hidden mysteries of the divine nature and its marvellous association with our own. What human intellect can even begin to encompass how God the Father without beginning and without end eternally begets God the Son? – into whom in the act of generation he pours the whole of himself, and yet loses nothing; and the Son is born from him, yet never leaves the Father who brings him into life? Or again, how the Holy Spirit proceeds from them both in such a way that there is a perfect community of the same nature between them all, with no confusion between the individuality of the three persons? Who can embrace in his understanding the bond by which that supreme and ineffable nature bound man unto itself, so that the same person who had eternally been very God of very God was born very man of man?

In expounding subjects of this kind, in which sometimes the alteration of a word might be an offence beyond expiation, what freedom can there be for paraphrase? Besides which, I saw that my journey would lie through country thickly beset with constant difficulties of every kind, interrupted by precipices, impassable with forest and with bogs, and barred by floods and whirlpools. No gospel has given rise to more numerous or more difficult problems concerning the faith, none has been the object of more intense

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1333

[1] Ep 1255

[2] See Ep 1255:27–31, 82–6.

[3] The archbishop of Mainz and the bishop of Rochester had both encouraged Erasmus to undertake the paraphrase on John; Epp 1308:23–4, 1323:22–4.

efforts by the greatest intellects of antiquity, none has seen greater disagreement among its interpreters, and this I ascribe not to their stupidity or lack of experience, but either to the obscurity of the language or to the difficulty of the subject-matter. And there were those further problems in which this activity is specially involved: almost all of the language which the evangelist puts into the mouth of the Lord Jesus is highly figurative and obscure. If one makes these figures clear in the paraphrase, there is no connection with the answers given to him by men who had failed to understand what he said. For the way in which our Lord says many things shows that he knew they could not be understood, and did not wish them to be understood,[4] until the course of events should make his meaning plain.

And again, while it is the paraphrast's business to set forth at greater length what has been expressed concisely, it was equally impossible for me to observe the limits of time. Our Lord is said to have celebrated the Last Supper by night with his disciples, and while they were at dinner he washed their feet; yet after supper he held that long discourse with them, until one wonders how there could have been time to say so much; especially since we know from the narrative of the other evangelists that much else was both said and done during that same night. This made it impossible for me to observe the limits of time, for I had to set out all these things at even greater length.

Last but not least, John has a style of his own; he strings his words together as though they were links in a chain, held together sometimes by a balance of contraries, sometimes by linking like with like, sometimes by repeating the same thing several times, so that these elegances of style cannot be reproduced in a paraphrase. For instance, 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.'[5] In these three phrases, 'Word' answers to 'Word' and 'God' to 'God'; and then he completes the circle by repeating his opening phrase, 'This was in the beginning with God.'[6] And again, 'All things were made by him, and without him was nothing made. What was made in him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shines in darkness, and the darkness has

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[4] This sentence is the first of three passages in this letter (see also nn17 and 20 below) that were condemned, along with much else, in the *Annotationes* (1526) of the Paris theologian Noël Béda. In 1526–7, Erasmus replied in his *Divinationes*, *Elenchus*, and *Supputatio*. With respect to this passage, which Béda called impious, Erasmus replied in the *Supputatio* that the Doctors of the church had found this very quality of Jesus' teaching a mark of his mercy towards weak human understanding; LB IX 622A–E.

[5] John 1:1

[6] John 1:2

not understood it.'[7] In these it is clear that each limb of the sentence always picks up what preceded it, in such a way that the end of what precedes is the beginning of what follows, and one can recognize in this something like the effect aimed at in the figure called *echo* in Greek. On all these questions I have said something in my introductions.[8] This particular elegance in the expression I could see that I should often have to jettison in a paraphrase.

Thus it came about that, although I foresaw these difficulties and many others like them, none the less I set about this task, for so many great men urged me to undertake it by their encouragement or set me to it by their authority; and I was particularly encouraged by the success of the previous attempt, which was prompted by compliance rather than self-confidence. Nor was its success limited to the gratitude I received universally from fair-minded readers for the service I had done them. My work was acceptable to Charles, of all the emperors whom the world has known in the last eight hundred years the greatest, if one looks at the breadth of his dominions, and the best, if one considers his other truly imperial virtues, and especially his zeal for religion and piety; and that he found these efforts of mine most acceptable (for I had dedicated them to him) he showed not merely by his expression and by what he said, but in a letter which he wrote to me which was as complimentary as it was gracious.[9]

And so I thought it appropriate that, just as St Matthew had been dedicated to Charles, so St John should be dedicated to Ferdinand as Charles over again. Indeed, I flatter myself with the hope that this attempt will achieve the same success with Ferdinand as its patron that the other achieved under the emperor Charles. Two names in this age of ours are supremely fortunate, and one pair of brothers in our time are pre-eminent in promise, nor need we doubt, I think, that the virtuous desires of truly religious princes are brought by the favour of God to good effect. For I believe we can safely foresee a great future for those in whom, while they are still young men, a noble crop of virtues answers to the splendid hopes encouraged by the seed-time of their early years. Your spirit even in boyhood was something new and excellent, and displayed already the kindling sparks of such wisdom and temperance and gentleness, and such a

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[7] John 1:3–5

[8] The phrase translated as 'in my introductions' is *in argumentis*. The stylistic feature to which Erasmus refers here is discussed in the *argumentum* which precedes the paraphrase on the First Epistle of John (LB VII 1141–2) and also in the annotation to John 1:3 (ibidem VI 339B–C). There is no *argumentum* in the paraphrase on John's Gospel.

[9] Ep 1270

sense of honour, and such religion and piety, that everyone was confident we should have an exceptional prince and one perfect at all points.

And if hitherto you have not betrayed the confidence placed in you by the whole world, you now do something more: you make us believe that, now you are grown up, you will fully satisfy what are no longer merely the hopes but the prayers of us all. My book on the Christian prince,[10] such as it is, you commended to all who care for such things long ago, while you were yet a youth, by being so good as to read it.[11] And now this book, which is expressly dedicated to you, you must be so good as to recommend, now that you are a young man, the most successful of our age and for many reasons the most universally popular. And the purpose is not that it may bring you any credit or me some advantage, for your exalted position and your natural modesty alike neither need nor wish for praise from ordinary men, and my own spirit seeks nothing but Christ's approval, but rather that it may bear more abundant fruit for those on whose behalf these efforts were expended – and they were spent for the common good of all men. For things good in themselves bring in great profit only when the moment comes that they have conquered envy and achieved popular approval. To this it will be an important contribution, if you make it clear that the gift of this work of mine was not unwelcome.

For there is no fear, I imagine, that someone of your wisdom will give a hearing to the people who will say perhaps, when they see a gospel paraphrase dedicated to a Prince Ferdinand, 'What business has a lay prince, what business has a young man, with the gospel?', and will take me to task in the words of the old Greek proverb about serving wine to the frogs.[12] As though the only men who give princes the right presents are the authors who offer them books in some barbaric language on hunting and the management of kennels, on the care of horses, on siege-engines, or perhaps on games of chance.[13] My own opinion is the opposite: that the philosophy of the gospel, fruitful as it is above everything for all men of high or low degree or of the middle sort, is more needed by the world's most powerful monarchs than by anyone. The greater the mass of business they must carry, the more fraught with peril the tempest of affairs which they must control, the more the opportunities offered them such as can often corrupt upright, well-born, well-educated natures, the more carefully ought they to be equipped and armed beforehand with the purest and most unfailing principles of gospel teaching; for if they go wrong, it is the whole world that suffers. Bishops have a special duty to feed the people from the abundant stores of gospel wisdom, and are therefore spoken of as shepherds; I quite agree. But there is reason for the praise that Homer earns, even from men who win high praise among Christians, for calling a king the shepherd of the people.[14] How much more closely should this title fit a Christian prince! The prince does not teach the gospel, he sets an example of it; and he who sets an example teaches too. But how can he set an example of something he does not know? And how will he come to know it, unless he grows familiar by frequent and attentive reading, and by serious effort gives it deep root in his own heart?

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[10] See Ep 1323 n1.

[11] See Ep 1323 n2.

[12] That is, giving someone something he does not need; *Adagia* II iii 20

[13] Since Erasmus was by no means hostile to the vernacular tongues (see, for example, Ep 1126:105–9), this must be a slighting reference to the non-literary Latin used in books on the practical subjects listed.

Who needs to be persuaded more than they that there is a king in heaven who governs this world and whom nothing can escape, whose eye no man can evade, whose power no man can resist, and who will judge each man as he deserves – who needs this more than the sovereign princes, so powerful that they fear no man and can deceive all men at will; who if they do wrong are not merely free from the summons to any earthly tribunal but are actually praised for their misdeeds? In whose minds should the conviction be more firmly implanted that after this life, which even for kings cannot be relied on to last longer than a single day and for no man can last long, there follows a life which will never end, in which with no respect for persons or positions (except that those who have enjoyed more power than others here will have the heavier case to meet) each man will face the inescapable sentence of an incorruptible judge and reap the crop he has sown here, nor will anyone escape the alternative of receiving for his good deeds a crown of eternal blessedness or for his evil deeds being handed over to the eternal punishments of hell-fire? Who needs this conviction more than those who are tempted by prosperity all around them and by the approval of mankind to love the present and forget the future? Who need to be more deeply impressed for their own good by Christ's denunciation 'Woe to the rich and the powerful who have their reward in this world'[15] than those who have an unlimited supply of all the things that can weaken mortal resolution? Who should more properly have learned the lesson that each man's talent is lent him for the advantage of the Lord, who will call on all men to render their account, and should be laid out with care than they who, because the Lord has given them power, have it in their hands to be a source

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[14] Eg, *Iliad* 1.263 and passim, especially in reference to Agamemnon

[15] Luke 6:24

of much good or much evil in the affairs of men? Who have more need of the sure conviction that men, however great and highly placed, can of themselves do nothing; that for all of them anything that can truly be called a blessing comes from Christ; that they must ask him for everything that can be asked for in a Christian's prayers, and ascribe to him alone the glory for all their achievements – who needs this more than those who, in return for advantages which Christ taught us to despise, receive the plaudits of the world as truly happy and who, because they enjoy some empty symbols of felicity, are admired and reverenced by the common throng of men almost like gods? Who ought to be more fully persuaded that brutality is hateful in the Lord's eyes, and that one wrong must not be compensated by another, that nothing is better than peace or more pleasing to God than mildness and clemency – who more than those who have so many temptations every day to violence and war and vengeance? Who should have more deeply impressed upon their minds that neither desire of life nor fear of death ought to deflect them from the path of duty and that no man ought to hope for the reward of his good deeds in this life, while in the world to come no man can fail of his deserts – who more than princes, whom so many temptations, so many violent commotions, and so many opportunities continually encourage to do wrong? Surely a spirit like theirs, on which depends the public happiness or misery of the world, ought to be fortified with serious and solid principles of philosophy, that it may be able, upright and unshaken, to withstand all the siege-engines that this world can bring against it.

But principles of this kind, which like the ballast in a ship do not allow the mind to be tossed to and fro by the waves of fortune and events, cannot be drawn from any better or more reliable or more effective source than the study of the gospel. It may be that a secular prince, absorbed as he must be for the most part in grosser business and in his duty to defend the public peace, cannot always achieve the results which he clearly perceives to be the most just; but if he has once drunk deep of the gospel philosophy, it will do this for him at least, that so far as he can he will always strive for what is nearest to the commands of Christ and will be deflected as little as possible from his aim. This we wish we may find in all those who govern the affairs of men upon earth; but in you, Ferdinand, we are confident that we shall: we know that from your earliest years you were remarkably disposed to love the reading of the Gospels, for it was not your habit to while away the time while the priest was saying mass in muttering superstitious prayers or in frivolous conversation, as most great men usually do, but to open the gospel-book and reverently look to see what lesson was taught by the epistle or gospel for the day. And I do not doubt that increasing years have much developed the sample that you gave us in your boyhood; I have no ordinary hopes that we shall see great crowds of mortals everywhere follow your example. For while vice is an infection that spreads very easily to the multitude when it starts from men in high place, the example of virtue in the same way is very quick to find a welcome everywhere if it takes its rise from some distinguished source.

With what solemnity the teaching of the gospel was clothed in former times, the ceremonies handed down from antiquity which the church still observes will suffice to show. The text in use is beautifully decorated with gold and ivory and precious stones; it is scrupulously preserved among the sacred treasures, and not laid down or taken in hand without signs of reverence. Permission is asked from the priest to read it aloud; it is sanctified by perfuming with frankincense and oil of myrrh, with balsam and with spices; every brow, every bosom is signed with the sign of the cross; all bow their heads and ascribe glory to the Lord; all rise to their feet and stand to their full height, with bare head and attentive ear and downcast eye. At the name of Jesus, every time it occurs, every knee is bowed; then the book is carried round, held in deep reverence close to the bosom, that every man may show his adoration with a kiss, until at length it is reverently replaced among the sacred treasures. What is the message of these ceremonies, what else have they to teach us, except that to Christians nothing ought to be so important, so much beloved, so much respected as that heavenly philosophy which Christ himself delivered to us all, which for so many centuries has enjoyed world-wide acceptance, and alone can make us impregnable against this world and the prince of this world?

But think how rightly the Jews are criticized for empty superstition which does not put first things first,[16] when they treat the book of their law with such extraordinary veneration, laying clean linen cloths beneath it, falling down before it and worshipping it, not touching it except with hands that are ritually clean, while in their impiety they pay no attention to the chief lessons of that very law; for in just the same way we must take care not to be found as truly pagan in our neglect of the gospel as we are scrupulous in our ceremonious respect for it. What purpose is served by a text adorned with ivory and silver and gold, with silk and precious stones, if our way of life is defiled with the taint of vices which are execrated by the gospel, if our spirit lacks all the radiance of the gospel virtues? Of what use is it to press a volume close to the heart, if that heart is far removed from what the volume teaches, and what it condemns is sovereign in the heart? What does the

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[16] On Erasmus' attitude towards the Jews, see Ep 694 introduction. But see also Heiko A. Oberman *The Roots of Anti-Semitism in the Age of Renaissance and Reformation* trans James I. Porter (Philadelphia 1984) 38–40, 58–9.

fragrance of all this incense signify, if its teaching smells stale to us, while our way of life stinks like the grave? Of what use to bow the head before a gospel-book, if our lusts hold their head high and fight against its principles? What do we gain by rising from our seats and standing bareheaded, if our whole life is such as openly displays contempt for the lessons of the gospel? How can a man find the face to kiss a volume of the Gospels who is a slave to lust and avarice, to ambition and gluttony and anger, and who treats its commands like dirt? How can he put to his lips a book which teaches nothing but peace, mildness, and charity when he despises Christ's teaching and is all corrupted with envy, besotted with hatred, aflame with anger, and swept by an accelerating passion for revenge into mad rage against his neighbour, giving full rein to his appetites and plunging the world into the raging confusion of war? How dare a man embrace and venerate the gospel-volume, whose every motive allies him to this world and who is execrated as an enemy by the philosophy of that same gospel?

Can we handle the gospel-volume with clean hands and as godly men should, and yet with unclean hearts despise the precepts of the gospel? It is these, surely, that we should clasp to our bosoms, these that we should spiritually put to our lips, and before these that we should bow our heads. Some people even have part of St John's Gospel copied out and wear it hanging round their necks to shield them from sickness or unhappy accidents of other kinds.[17] Surely it is the teaching of that gospel that we ought to wear next our hearts to be our shield against all the sickness of sin. I do not disapprove of ceremonies or criticize the religion of simple folk. But such things will never do us any good unless and until we carry out in practice what we are called upon to do by these visible signs. If we are true Christians, which means that we profess the gospel teaching as its law directs, let us take all these external symbols and make them real in our hearts.

I hear there is a custom among certain peoples that the prince should stand for the reading of the gospel holding in his hand a naked sword, and all the others with their hands on their sword-hilts. But how can a man use his sword to defend the gospel whose spirit is an enemy of the gospel, who breathes the spirit of the world entirely, who despises nothing so much as that pearl of great price which is the gospel and hates nothing so much as the one thing which Christ taught us to seek, who preys upon his people, who oppresses the poor, who confounds all things human and divine by going to war, who provides so many evils with a starting-point and to glut his ambition sheds so much human blood? How can he brandish the sword in

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[17] Cf Ep 563:24–31 and the *Enchiridion* LB V 30F / CWE 66–70.

defence of the gospel of Christ? Let him first make his own peace with the gospel, let him first use the sword of the gospel to cut back the evil desires in his own heart, and then, if he likes, let him draw that sword to threaten the enemies of the gospel.

Give me leave to say this, illustrious Prince, to establish the facts, with no criticism of anyone. I simply exhibit the principle, and cast no slur on individuals; and this I write with all the greater freedom because not the slightest suspicion of these evils could touch a man of your high character. To no one after the bishops is the religion of the gospel more appropriate than it is to princes; but princes in their simplicity are often deceived by the semblance of religion. Sometimes they are persuaded by men whose credentials are the profession of a perfectly religious life, and suppose that perfect piety consists in the performance of a daily stint of what they call the hour-offices and in letting no day pass without hearing mass. In a prince who is a layman and a young man too this would, I admit, be some evidence of a religious disposition; but there are many other things more closely related to the duty of a Christian prince. If he looks ahead to forestall the storms of war before they rise, to prevent any violent assault on public liberty, to see that humble folk are not forced to go hungry and corrupt men not given office, in my opinion he will have offered God a more acceptable sacrifice than if for six years he has told those beads we hear so much of. Yet I commend this too, provided that what really matters goes with it.[18]

If however a prince were to suppose that he has met all the demands of true godliness because he can rely on the observance of such things as this, and were to neglect other things which are a proper part of his kingly office, this is a real canker in religion and a deadly sickness in the body politic, and those who make him think so are evil counsellors to both prince and people. It is a godly action to hear mass, provided one attends with a pure heart. But how can I approach with a pure heart the memorial of that true and supreme prince who gave his life for the salvation of his people, if my anger, my ambition, or my sloth bring misery or death to so many thousands of my fellow men? To say nothing for the moment of the fact that princes have scarcely any time of greater leisure and fewer anxieties than that which they reserve for divine service; and yet why is it so important that the prince

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[18] This passage, beginning above at 'Sometimes they are persuaded' (line 300), was also censured by Béda (see n4 above), who called it Lutheran. Erasmus replied in the *Divinationes* (LB IX 481A–E), *Elenchus* (ibidem 499F–500A), and finally at length in the *Supputatio* (ibidem 622E–624B), pointing out that he had never rejected princes' attending mass or saying the offices; he had only said that these are not the chief duties of princes, as the passage itself makes clear.

should say those prayers at regular hours, when he can never find all the time he needs for the business of the commonwealth?

A prince will have uttered prayers in great plenty if he repeats every day, and repeats from the bottom of his heart, the prayer of that young king who was the wisest of mankind:[19] 'Lord, grant me wisdom and understanding, that I may go in and out before thy people.' Or one very close to that which the same king, if I am not mistaken, recites in what is called the Book of Wisdom: 'Give me Wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne, that she may be present with me and may labour with me, that I may know what is pleasing unto thee. For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and she shall lead me soberly in my doings, and preserve me in her power, and my works shall be acceptable, and I shall judge thy people righteously, and be worthy to sit in my father's seat. But thy counsel who shall know, except thou hast given wisdom, and hast sent thy Holy Spirit from the highest; and so the ways of them which live on the earth have been reformed, and men have been taught the things that are pleasing unto thee?'[20] And this wisdom, for which that very wise young man prays, may be found above all in the text of the Gospels, if a man searches for it wholeheartedly and with a pious desire to find. Otherwise how has it come to pass that the moral standard of Christians has partly sunk back into a way of life like that of gentiles but worse, and partly has degenerated into a kind of Judaism, unless this comes from neglect of the teaching of the gospel? Although, to speak openly, in no centuries have men been lacking to pay the gospel the honour that is its due; but all the same in these last four hundred years its energy in most hearts had grown cold.[21] All the more then must we use every effort to rekindle to the best of our power, each one of us, that spark of fire sent down to earth by our Lord Jesus, the eternal Truth; nor has he any other wish except that it be blown into a mighty flame, spread far and wide, and set all things on fire.

When the moral standards of the age are so much corrupted, and there are these great dissensions in men's thinking that now reduce all things to chaos, where can we better seek refuge than, as St Hilary rightly points out,

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[19] Solomon; see 2 Chron 1:10.

[20] Wisd of Sol 9:4, 10–12, 17–18

[21] This sentence was criticized not only by Béda (see n4 above) but also by the Paris faculty of theology (in a formal judgment adopted in 1527 but not published until 1531). Both read the sentence as a Lutheranizing assault on scholastic theology. Erasmus replied to Béda in the *Supputatio* (LB IX 624B–E) and to the faculty in the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* of 1532 (ibidem 910F–911C), arguing that he was not condemning scholastic theology or theologians out of hand but rather the excesses that had resulted from closer attention to intellectual systems than to the vigour of the gospel.

in the pure springs of Holy Scripture, of which the Gospels are the purest and most unsullied part? Rulers ought not to suspect the gospel on the ground that, as certain persons idly cry, it spreads subversion among those whose duty it is to be obedient to princes. Not at all: what it does for princes is to make them princes true to the name instead of tyrants, and what it does for the people is to make them more willing to obey a good prince and more patient in bearing one they do not like. And in the end of all it should not be considered the fault of the gospel if someone makes a less than admirable use of something admirable in itself. It is called the gospel of peace, first as reconciling us to God and secondly as uniting us among ourselves in mutual concord. The man who stumbles over this stone has only himself to thank and not the gospel. There is no human violence, no cunning, no massing of forces that can suppress the gospel truth, which shows its power most clearly when it is most oppressed.

But on all this I fear I have already said more than enough. So, after a few words on the author's purpose to increase the profit of reading him, I will make an end. When our Lord Jesus Christ's life and teaching had already been spread widely through the world by the preaching of the apostles and the writings of the other evangelists, John, well known as he whom Jesus loved, took in hand last of them all the writing of this gospel, not so much to put together a gospel-history as to supply certain things that the other evangelists had passed over, since they seemed not unworthy of record. But the chief reason for his writing this gospel is thought to be the desire to assert the divinity of Christ against the heresies which were already like evil tares sprouting up in the good crop; in particular those of the Cerinthians and the Ebionites,[22] who apart from other errors taught that Christ had been nothing more than a man and had not existed at all before he was born of Mary. It was however of the first importance that the world should know and believe that Christ was at once true God and true man. Of which the latter first makes a contribution towards arousing men's love towards him (for we are more ready to love things which we know) and then provides a keener incentive to imitate him. For who would try to emulate what had been done by an angel in appearance only and not also in truth?

Furthermore, seeing that the difficulty of what he tells us to do is matched by the splendour of the promises he makes us, it was right that his divine nature should not remain unknown, to give us confidence that he will beyond question be the defender of his own people, whom he so dearly loved, and that we can rely upon the promises of one whose lightest nod can accomplish whatever he wishes. But the earlier evangelists had scarcely touched on the divinity of the Lord Jesus. For this I take to be the wisdom of which Paul used to speak 'among them that are perfect,' while professing in front of everyone else 'not to know anything save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.'[23] Perhaps the time was not yet ripe for such an ineffable mystery to be made public in written form, for fear the godless might laugh to scorn what they could neither believe nor understand. Though in other ways too all the ancients are very reticent and use scrupulous language whenever they speak of what relates to the deity, while using greater freedom in what conduces more to living a godly life. Thus it was the foolhardiness of heretics that drove the apostle into more openly claiming divine nature for Christ,[24] just as the boldness of the Arians drove the orthodox Fathers to lay down some more definite principles on the same subject when they would have preferred to refrain from defining the kind of thing that far surpasses the capacity of the human mind and cannot be defined without great peril. And this province was rightly left for the blessed John, Jesus' beloved disciple; for seeing that he who is the fountain of all wisdom loved John above the rest, we may well believe that he inspired his favourite, if I may use the term, with a fuller knowledge of certain mysteries. Let us all therefore drink deep of this man whom Christ loved, that we in our turn may deserve to become lovers of Christ.

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[22] The Cerinthians were the followers of Cerinthus, a Gnostic teacher in Asia Minor c 100 AD who denied the virgin birth and the divinity of Christ. The Ebionites were Jewish Christians who insisted on the observance of the whole law, viewed Paul as a heretic, and agreed with Cerinthus on the person of Jesus. Cf n24 below.

There is one point only to which I wish to draw the reader's attention. In this work I have followed the most approved Doctors of the church, but not indiscriminately or at all points, for they too sometimes disagree among themselves. But I always put forward in all honesty what seemed to me to be the true meaning, although I could clearly see that ancient authorities engaged in fighting the views of heretics distort the sense in places with some force. I should be sorry however if anyone were to assign to this paraphrase more authority than he would have assigned to a commentary, if I had written one; not but what a paraphrase too is a kind of commentary. Allegorical interpretations, to which I find some of the ancients devoted so much space that it became a superstition, I have touched on sparingly, and never more than I thought would suffice. Farewell, most honoured Prince;

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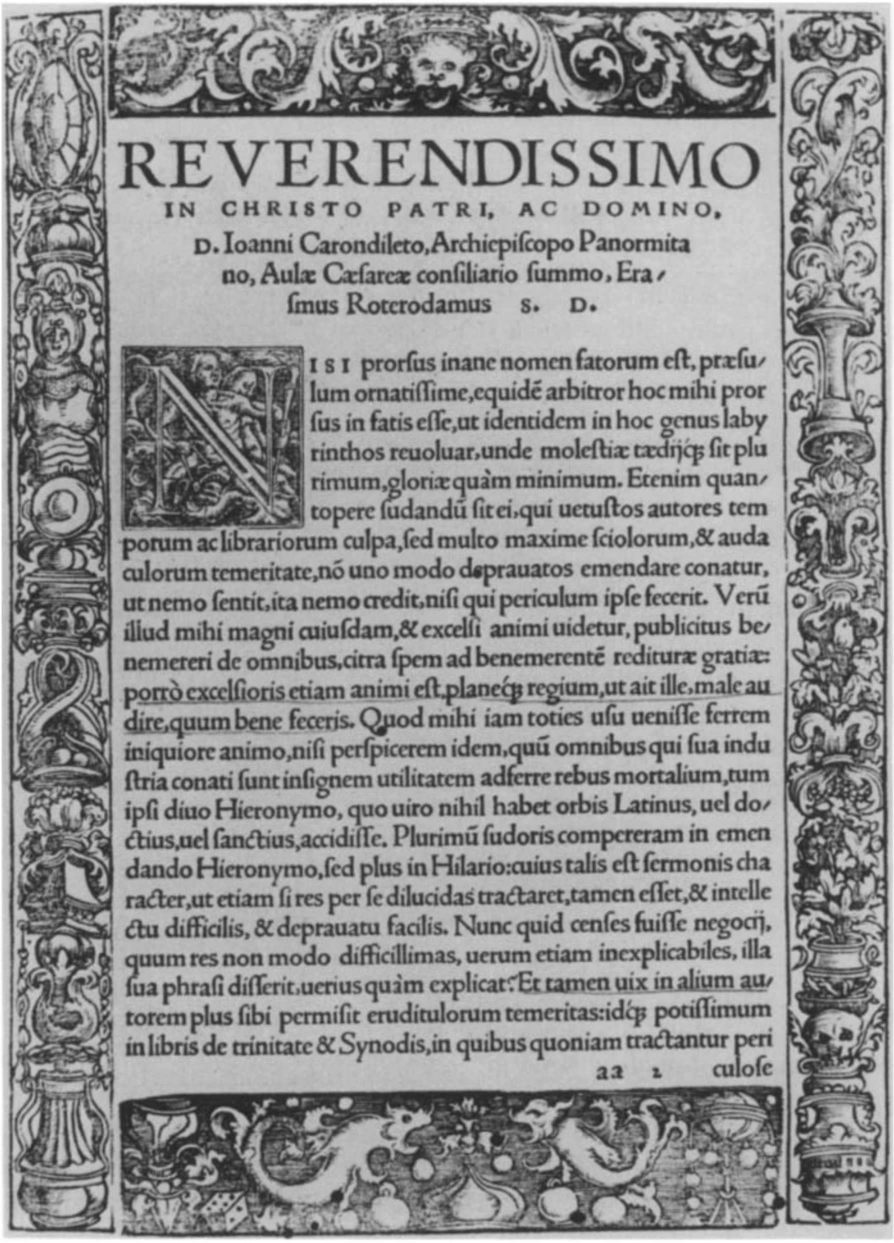
[23] 1 Cor 2:6 and 2

[24] In his *Adversus omnes haereses* 3.11.1, Irenaeus asserts that John wrote his Gospel especially against the errors of Cerinthus (n22 above).



REVERENDISSIMO
IN CHRISTO PATRI, AC DOMINO,
D. Ioanni Carondileto, Archiepiſcopo Panormitano, Aulæ Cæſareæ conſiliario ſummo, Eraſmus Roterodamus S. D.

NISI prorſus inane nomen fatorum eſt, præſulum ornatiſſime, equidē arbitror hoc mihi prorſus in fatis eſſe, ut identidem in hoc genus labyrinthos reuoluar, unde moleſtiæ tædijq; ſit plurimum, gloriæ quàm minimum. Etenim quantopere ſudandū ſit ei, qui uetuſtos autores temporum ac librariorum culpa, ſed multo maxime ſciolorum, & audaculorum temeritate, nó uno modo deprauatos emendare conatur, ut nemo ſentit, ita nemo credit, niſi qui periculum ipſe fecerit. Verū illud mihi magni cuiuſdam, & excelſi animi uidetur, publicitus benemereri de omnibus, citra ſpem ad benemerentē rediture gratiæ: porrò excelſioris etiam animi eſt, planeq; regium, ut ait ille, male audire, quum bene feceris. Quod mihi iam toties uſu ueniſſe ferrem iniquiore animo, niſi perſpicerem idem, quū omnibus qui ſua induſtria conati ſunt inſignem utilitatem adferre rebus mortalium, tum ipſi diuo Hieronymo, quo uiro nihil habet orbis Latinus, uel doctius, uel ſanctius, accidiſſe. Plurimū ſudoris compereram in emendando Hieronymo, ſed plus in Hilario: cuius talis eſt ſermonis character, ut etiam ſi res per ſe dilucidas tractaret, tamen eſſet, & intellectu difficilis, & deprauatu facilis. Nunc quid cenſes fuiſſe negocij, quum res non modo difficillimas, uerum etiam inexplicabiles, illa ſua phraſi diſſerit, uerius quàm explicat? Et tamen uix in alium autorem plus ſibi permiſit eruditulorum temeritas: idq; potiſſimum in libris de trinitate & Synodis, in quibus quoniam tractantur peri

aa 2 culoſe

First page of the dedicatory preface addressed to
Jean de Carondelet (Ep 1334) in Erasmus' edition of St Hilary of Poitiers
Basel: Froben 1523
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, University of Toronto

with all your might strive for the glory of the gospel; and so may Christ the Almighty in return vouchsafe a favourable answer to your prayers.

Basel, 5 January 1523

1334 / To Jean de Carondelet Basel, 5 January 1523

This is the preface to the edition of St Hilary (Basel: Froben, February 1523) which Erasmus undertook in order to correct the deficiencies in the earlier edition of Robert Fortuné (Paris: Bade 1511). Urbanus Rhegius had encouraged Erasmus to devote his talents to Hilary (Ep 1253:31–3); Maternus Hatten had furnished a manuscript (Ep 1289:17–19); and Herman Lethmaet had requested (Ep 1320:10–12) that Erasmus dedicate a work to Jean de Carondelet (Ep 1276).

Hilary (c 315–67), bishop of Poitiers, was the church Father who led the fight against the Arian heresy in the West. 'Most of his works were composed in the context of the Arian struggle, and Erasmus in his preface uses the example of St Hilary or at least the occasion of his role in that widespread controversy to draw certain lessons about doctrinal controversy in general and the recently arisen Lutheran controversy in particular ... Indeed it [the preface] contains some of Erasmus' most pungent comments on the nature of theology and on the baleful consequences of theological argument and contention' (John C. Olin *Six Essays* [see below] 93). As a result, this prefatory letter to Carondelet became one of Erasmus' more controversial writings. In 1526 the faculty of theology at Paris censured several passages. The *censurae*, with Erasmus' replies, are found in LB IX 920–1, 925–8. The following year, 1527, a conference of theologians at Valladolid in Spain vehemently attacked several other passages; see Bataillon 276–8 and Allen VI 471. The censured passages are indicated in the notes.

For analysis of this important letter, see John C. Olin 'Erasmus and his Edition of St Hilary' *Erasmus in English* 9 (1978) 8–11.

The translation used here, by John C. Olin and James F. Brady jr, was first published as an appendix to Olin's *Six Essays on Erasmus* (Fordham University Press 1979) 93–120. The translation has been slightly revised; two passages omitted from the text in *Six Essays* (lines 564–603, 881–926) have been newly translated by Olin and Brady; and the original notes have been revised and expanded by the CWE annotator.

TO THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST AND LORD,
JEAN CARONDELET, ARCHBISHOP OF PALERMO,
HIGHER COUNSELLOR OF THE IMPERIAL COURT IN BRABANT,
GREETINGS FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Unless the word 'destiny' is entirely meaningless, most illustrious prelate, indeed I think I am destined to return again and again into labyrinths of the kind from which comes a great deal of vexation and weariness but the least possible measure of glory. In fact, without actual experience no one will believe, unless he personally has made the test, what effort he must expend who tries to emend the text of ancient authors which have been corrupted in various ways through fault of the times and copyists but above all because of the rashness of half-learned and foolhardy men. But it seems to me to be a mark of a great and lofty spirit publicly to serve all well even without the expectation of receiving thanks for such service. Further, it is the mark of even a loftier spirit and one which is wholly regal, as the saying goes, to be ill spoken of when one has done something worth while. And I would be more vexed that this has happened so often to me if I did not observe that the same thing has happened not only to all who have tried by their own industry to do something notably useful in the affairs of men, but even to St Jerome himself, whose learning or holiness is unsurpassed in the Latin world.

I had found the editing of Jerome's works a very arduous task,[1] but editing Hilary's text entailed even greater labour. The latter's style, even where the subject-matter itself is clear, is difficult to understand and susceptible to corruption. What, then, do you think was the nature of the task, when in that peculiar style of his he discusses rather than explains matters which are not only very difficult but even inexplicable? Yet scarcely in the case of another author has the rashness of the half-learned allowed itself greater liberty, and that especially with regard to *De Trinitate* and *De synodis*. Because theological problems fraught with danger are treated in these works the greatest care must be taken, nor must the slightest change be made. If we discover after comparing different copies that in some places prefatory remarks have been added to the beginning of chapters and also flourishes at the end and that in the middle patches have been sewn on, we are discovering that in some places someone with little learning has tried to explain more completely and clearly what Hilary in his own fashion had said. On some pages twenty or thirty lines had been added.[2]

How often they excise passages which seemed at variance with the opinions accepted among the orthodox. Indeed in more than twenty places they had compounded a remedy, especially where he debates about the

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1334

[1] See Epp 308, 396.

[2] Erasmus' complaints about the liberties taken by copyists and the corruption of Hilary's text are echoed in P. Smulders SJ 'Remarks on the Manuscript Tradition of the *De Trinitate* of Saint Hilary of Poitiers' *Studia Patristica* 3-1 (Berlin 1961) 133–4.

pains and torments which affected the body and soul of our Lord Jesus Christ. He does this in several places but chiefly in the tenth book of *De Trinitate*, though so confusedly that sometimes he clearly seems to attribute to Christ a body and soul subject to no troublesome conditions. When, to illustrate this, he used the comparison of a weapon penetrating water or fire by a violent thrust without the sign of a wound because the body attacked is not susceptible of a wound, although it is the nature of a weapon to inflict a wound,[3] someone took it upon himself to add the qualification 'if however this comparison can aptly be made.'[4] Again when a little later he added that 'that body of the Lord may indeed have had pain similar in nature to ours, if our body is so constituted that it treads upon the waves and walks upon the waters,' etc, concluding from this difference undoubtedly that the body of Jesus even in the sensation of pain was unlike our bodies, they had corrected the text to read as follows: 'That body of the Lord may indeed have had (because of sin) pain similar in nature to ours, if our body is so constituted that it treads upon the waves (by its own nature or by the extraordinary help of God) and walks upon the waters,' etc.[5]

A little later when St Hilary had written, 'And that man is from God, having indeed a body to suffer, and he did suffer, but not having a nature to feel pain,'[6] the passage was corrected, that is, corrupted, in this way: 'And he did suffer, but not having a nature (weak because of sin like ours) to feel pain.' Further on where Hilary had written, 'The opinion based on human judgment therefore that he feels pain because he suffers is mistaken,' they emended the wording thus: 'That he (as if in the flesh of sin) feels pain because he suffers.'[7] Likewise at the end of the second book when it was written as follows: 'Therefore we must seek this Holy Spirit, we must deserve him, and then we must hold him by that faithfulness to and observance of the commandments,' they had woven in, 'we must deserve him, we must adore him.' They feared undoubtedly that someone might suspect that he thought the Holy Spirit should not be adored when he teaches in many ways that the Father and the Son should be adored but makes no such pronouncement about the Spirit. Evidently this was because it did not come to his mind or because at that time this had not yet been precisely defined.

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[3] *De Trinitate* 10.23

[4] The interpolations discussed in this passage are not found in any known manuscript.

[5] *De Trinitate* 10.23

[6] Ibidem 10.47

[7] Cf Erasmus' dispute with Colet over the nature of Christ's agony in the garden of Gethsemane; Epp 108–9.

It is amazing, however, that the same individuals did not also corrupt the end of this work, where consistently it is written: 'May I adore you, our Father, and your Son together with you, and may I be deserving of your Holy Spirit who is from you through the only begotten Son.' For here also when he declares that the Father and the Son 'should be adored,' he says only that Holy Spirit 'should be deserved.' We have discovered such additions in more than thirty places in Hilary, although we have cited no more than one or two passages as examples to avoid irritating the reader. Again I am amazed that when he writes that the Holy Spirit is from the Father through the Son and that he does not proceed from both, it was not also corrected. Indeed in one particular text I discovered this correction: *through him* was changed to *with him.*

Now what is this rashness shown toward the writings of others, especially those ancient authors whose memory, as it should be, is sacred to us, I mean the readiness to erase, expunge, add to, delete, change, forge – when there is no personal risk – any author at will? Is the object of this to prevent anyone from thinking that there are any errors in the works of the ancients? Indeed whoever should try that would wash a brick, as they say.[8] God has willed that the happy state of freedom from error be reserved for the sacred books alone. Everyone else, however learned and keen-sighted he may be, on occasion stumbles and gropes blindly. Obviously therefore all remember that they are humans and as humans they are read by us, with discrimination, with judgment, and at the same time with indulgence. But if anything occurs in these writings which has the appearance of error, when the author has a different opinion, the work must not be contaminated, but scruples should be allayed by adding explanatory notes. Peter Lombard attempts this in very many places, at the same time citing and explaining several passages concerning the pain and fear of Christ in the third book of the *Sentences.*[9]

That famous epigrammatic poet does not tolerate him who wishes to show his cleverness in another's book.[10] But who would tolerate those who arrogate so much to themselves that they sew on their own patches in place of the genuine text wherever they please? It is a mark of courtesy to interpret a work properly. To change arbitrarily the actual words in the works of the ancients, however, is an act of rashness, not to say irreverence. And yet we discover that this has been done even in the books of St Ambrose and in more than one place. If the risk to the writer must be taken into account

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[8] Terence *Phormio* 186; *Adagia* I iv 48

[9] 3.15.5, where Lombard discusses certain passages from Hilary

[10] Martial 1 praef

when a text is changed, it would be more fitting to do this in the books of modern authors, whom time has not yet placed outside the uncertainty of judgment or death thus far delivered from envy. Now almost too scrupulously fair toward the ancient writers, we distort certain passages which have nothing wrong with them in the authors of our own age and we interpret everything improperly, just as if such an exegete would not be likely to find even in the Pauline Epistles something which he would be able to misrepresent as erroneous, as suspect of heresy, as scandalous, as irreverent.

But let us drop this subject. It is better that I briefly express my opinion about each of Hilary's works individually. He wrote the twelve books of *De Trinitate* when an exile in Phrygia, where he had been banished by the faction of a certain Saturninus, bishop of Arles, which had circumvented the emperor. Indeed the Arian faction had sunk its roots so widely, had become so strong that the world for a long time wavered in doubt as to which cause it would espouse, especially when the emperor Constantius by the use of exile, plundering, threats, and alarms forced men to go over to the side of the Arians. Wherefore Hilary complained to Caesar that it was shameful that men in an unprecedented fashion were being forced rather than persuaded to accept the faith, granting that the faith of the Arians was sincere. And indeed he himself testifies in several places that for a long time he was silent. He observed this silence either because the soul even of that great man felt some doubt amid such widespread discord in the world or because when there was no hope that the better side could win he thought it preferable to adopt a calm silence rather than to exacerbate, not remove, the world's general depravity by untimely boldness. He seems to have exerted all his energy, however, to manifest and put forth in this work whatever he could by his natural ability, by his eloquence, and by his knowledge of Holy Scripture. For we see that it was usually the ambition of distinguished writers as well as of outstanding painters and sculptors to leave in some one work a finished and complete example of their art by which posterity might be able to evaluate what they would have been able to do if they had wished to exert their fullest powers. Virgil seems to have attempted this in the *Georgics*, Ovid in his *Medea*, Cicero in *De oratore*, Augustine in *De civitate Dei*, Jerome in his commentaries on the prophets, Thomas Aquinas on the subject of the Eucharist,[11] Bernard on the Canticle.[12]

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[11] This is probably a reference to the *Summa theologiae* 3.73–83, though Aquinas dealt with the same topic in other works as well, including especially his commentary on the fourth book of the *Sentences* ('distinctiones' 8–13).

[12] *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum*

We are stimulated more to this effort if there should come to hand a theme which is not only lofty and important but also new and accordingly not hackneyed. Indeed the grandeur of a subject, besides permitting a lofty treatment, also lends dignity of itself, and the newness adds to the charm. Moreover, the ancient authors philosophized very rarely about theological questions, and they did not dare to make any pronouncement about such matters which was not clearly set forth in those writings whose authority is inviolable to us. But the irreverent rashness of the Cerinthians and the Ebionites first drove John the Evangelist to commit to writing certain mysteries concerning the divine nature of Christ.[13] Later the elaborate subtlety of the Arians drove the orthodox to a greater necessity – namely, to discuss with great controversy the question of the extension of the divine nature, of the creation of the Son, of the adoption into the name of God, and then the matter of ὁμοούσιον and ὁμοιούσιον,[14] and finally to formulate definitions about these matters. Repeatedly the most saintly Hilary deplores this necessity, knowing full well how fraught with danger and how inimical to devotion it is to speak out on matters which are beyond discussion, to examine matters beyond understanding, to make pronouncements on matters beyond the grasp of the intelligence.[15] But St Augustine was carried still farther on this sea, evidently because the joy of inquiry like a favourable breeze lured the rich talent of the man from one realm of thought to another. More restraint is exercised by Peter Lombard, who when he cites another's views does not lightly add anything of his own, or if he adds anything, he offers it with diffidence. At length the matter advanced to the point of irreverent audacity.

But may the ancients gain the pardon besought by those whom necessity has driven to this pass. On what pretext will we ask pardon for ourselves, we who raise so many meddlesome, not to say irreverent, questions concerning matters very far removed from our nature, and who formulate so many definitions about matters which could have been either ignored without loss of salvation or left in doubt?[16] Or is he not destined to

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[13] See Ep 1333 nn22 and 24.

[14] 'Homoousion' and 'homoiousion' mean 'of the same substance' and 'of a similar substance,' respectively, and were terms used in the controversy in the fourth century over the divinity of Christ.

[15] This is one of the passages censured by the Paris theologians in 1526. The *censura* declared that St Hilary did not think it dangerous to make pronouncements which conformed to the decisions of ecumenical councils; LB IX 925E–F.

[16] This sentence and the one following it were censured by the Paris theologians on the ground that they were 'contumelious' towards general councils and the study of the Doctors of the church; LB IX 920E–921A.

have fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who cannot disentangle according to the method of philosophy what distinguishes the Father from the Son or the Holy Spirit from both or what the difference is between the generation of the Son from the Father and the procession of the Spirit? If I believe, as has been handed down, that the three are of one nature, what is the need of laboured disputation? If I do not believe, no human reasons will convince me. And such a dangerous inquisitiveness has generally arisen in us from the study of philosophy, a fact which the illustrious Tertullian, the most learned by far of all the Latin theologians, has asserted in several places,[17] although he himself was a philosopher of the first rank.

Socrates of Athens, to whom is attributed this famous axiom, 'What is above us is of no concern to us,'[18] brought down philosophy from the contemplation of natural phenomena into the midst of human life and frequently quoted that line from Homer: 'What evil and what good have been wrought in thy halls.'[19] Nevertheless, many things are apprehended with certainty concerning the nature of the stars, the motion of the celestial spheres, lightning, the winds, the rainbow, and similar phenomena, because either the bodily senses themselves or the observation of effects provide the beginnings of knowledge for matters of this nature, and the knowledge is especially pleasing and moves one at the same time to wonder and to love of the Maker. But yet because the wise man perceived that men sat idle all their lifetime in such study and neglected meanwhile what has greater relevance for us, he diverted all study from the contemplation of natural phenomena to the consideration of morals.[20] But those questions which we investigate and which we define sometimes have not been recorded in Holy Scripture, so that even if they cannot be understood they must at least be believed; nor can they, as they stand, be proved by any satisfactory arguments or grasped by the intellect or even vaguely conceived of by like means. And after the richest talents have applied all their energy for a long time to the investigation of them, this at last is the final result of their effort: they realize they know nothing; and what is more they contribute nothing to the devout life. Thus nowhere more does that well-known passage of Paul apply, 'Knowledge puffs up, charity builds up.'[21]

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[17] *De praescriptione* 7–14; *De anima* 2.7

[18] See *Adagia* I vi 69, quoting Lactantius *Divinae institutiones* 3.20.

[19] *Odyssey* 4.392

[20] Socrates, as described by Cicero in the *Tusculanae disputationes* 5.4.10

[21] 1 Cor 8:1. The passage beginning 'But those questions' (line 202) was censured by the Paris theologians, who defended the definition of dogma

What arrogance, what contentions, what tumult, what discord in the world do we see gush forth from this kind of absurd learning! Although our life is so fleeting, we neglect meanwhile those things without which no one has any hope of attaining salvation. Unless I pardon my brother's sins against me, God will not pardon my transgressions against him. Unless I have a pure heart, I shall not see God. Therefore with all my energy I must aim, I must practise, I must strive to cleanse my soul of malice, envy, hatred, pride, avarice, and lust. You will not be damned if you do not know whether the Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son has a single or a double principle, but you will not escape perdition unless you see to it in the mean time that you have the fruits of the Spirit, which are charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, forbearance, gentleness, faith, moderation, self-control, and chastity.[22] Towards this end the chief concern of our study therefore must be focused and directed. Not that I think either that inquiry in the three divisions of philosophy[23] or that the investigation of phenomena beyond this world should be entirely condemned, provided that the inquirer is endowed with rich talent and is purged of rashness in defining, of obstinacy, and of the bane of harmony, the stubborn passion to get the upper hand.

The sum and substance of our religion is peace and concord.[24] This can hardly remain the case unless we define as few matters as possible and leave each individual's judgment free on many questions. This is because there is great uncertainty about very many issues, and the mind of man suffers from this deeply ingrained weakness, that it does not know how to give way when a question has been made a subject of contention. And after the debate has warmed up each one thinks that the side he has undertaken rashly to defend is absolute truth. In this regard certain men were so lacking in moderation that after defining everything in theology they contrived for those who are no more than men a new status of divinity,[25] and this has

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about the Trinity and denied that this was 'knowledge that puffs up.' See LB IX 921E–F.

[22] Gal 5:22. This sentence was censured by the Paris theologians; ibidem 920F–921A.

[23] Ie, rational, natural, and moral

[24] Censured by the Paris theologians; LB IX 926B–D

[25] The Paris theologians censured this passage on the ground that it 'erroneously and rashly' slandered scholastic theology; LB IX 920C. In his reply (ibidem 920D) Erasmus stated that the passage was aimed not at scholastic theologians in general but rather at 'those who attribute too much to the Roman pontiff [and] whose adulation [of the Roman pontiff] ... is not approved even by theologians.' Cf LB VI 927D: 'Men are at least as busy arguing about the pope's

aroused more questions and greater commotion in the world than the Arians in their foolishness once did. But certain pundits on some occasions are ashamed to have no rejoinder to make.[26] On the contrary this is indeed the mark of theological learning: to define nothing beyond what is recorded in Holy Scripture, but to dispense in good faith what is there recorded.[27] Many puzzling questions are now referred to an ecumenical council. It would be much more fitting to defer such questions to that time when we shall see God face to face without the mirror and without the mystery.[28]

But these matters will be discussed perhaps more appropriately elsewhere.[29] I now return to our main theme. The subject of Hilary's *De Trinitate* was especially magnificent and worthy of his lofty style, and it was new because, unless I am mistaken, Hilary was the first of the Latins to draw the sword of his eloquence against the Arians. That engagement also brought a great deal of fame to him chiefly because the issue was joined with a renowned foe. I do not doubt that several among the Greeks besides Athanasius did the same. But it was a practice of that age to cite no one by name with the exception of Holy Scripture, especially if the material was drawn from Greek sources, for these they claimed for themselves as if they had a right to them. In any case it seems to me to be the part of candour not to conceal the names of those whom you have used to your advantage. Hilary governs his expression throughout his work, however, as if he personally had dug each of his ideas out of the sacred books. And although I might have wished that such a talent, such an eloquence, such a mind might have richer and more fruitful material, nevertheless the profit to the reader from this work will also be not insignificant, because he explains with no less felicity than accuracy, in my opinion, very many passages in John and Paul which are quite obscure.

Furthermore Jerome in a certain letter to Paulinus, as he passes judgment on the learned, writes that Hilary is distinguished by a lofty Gallic style although in other respects his manner is marked by the embellish-

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authority as about God's ... Whether he is a mere man or, as it were, a God, or (with Christ) shares each nature.'

26 Censured by the Paris theologians; LB IX 928A–C. 'Pundits' (Erasmus actually uses the term 'rabbis') was understood as an insulting reference to the scholastic theologians who, according to the *censura*, were always ready with an effective rejoinder to heretics.

27 The Paris theologians condemned this as an impious view worthy of Wycliffe or Luther; LB IX 927A–D. Cf the *Ratio verae theologiae* (1518) LB V 83F–84A: 'The chief aim of theologians is to interpret wisely Holy Scripture.'

28 1 Cor 13:12. This sentence was censured by the Paris theologians; LB IX 927D–E.

29 Possibly in the *De ratione concionandi*, which Erasmus had recently begun to work on again; see Epp 1321 n1, 1332:36. See also lines 657–8 in this letter.

ments of the Greeks; he further says that he is read in vain by the more ignorant because he sometimes uses long, involved periods.[30] Although everywhere Hilary has his own characteristic style, it is especially present in this work. For to the subject-matter which, as is probable, he borrowed from the Greeks he has added Gallic grandiloquence; for a learned simplicity is characteristic of the Greeks, and a graceful and clear style is more to their liking than a lofty and laboured one. And he often plays with standard themes such as the following: it is very risky to discuss theological questions; it is deplorable that a man, anxious lest he be embarrassed, should stubbornly defend a manifest error; Holy Scripture should not be twisted to our inclinations, but our way of thinking should be corrected in accordance with the norm of Scripture.[31] Moreover he frequently rises to what I might call the grandeur of theatrical embellishments, especially in those parts which easily lend themselves to brilliant expression, as for instance parts dealing with the structure of the universe, the nature of the heavenly bodies, the harmonious discord of the elements, the gush of springs, the course of rivers, the ebb and flow of the tides, and the various fruits of the earth. And not infrequently he rises to the grandeur of tragic figures, personification and apostrophe, by means of which he addresses either heretics or God himself.

Perhaps this grandiloquence is a characteristic of the Gallic genius. Sulpicius Severus[32] possesses something of this sort, and Eucherius[33] also has it; the latter's is a grandiloquence which is even more elaborate but marked by a more felicitous care, if I am any judge. Nor does Guillaume Budé,[34] most renowned of the writers of this age, fail to reach the level of this style. His style is so elevated that one imagines one hears a trumpet sounding, not a man, and so felicitously finished that he never cloys the learned reader and keeps at a distance those who have only a rudimentary education. Furthermore, obscurity of expression results, albeit only in part, from the fact that Hilary often has difficulty rounding off a sentence composed of various clauses. Clarity, however, is also hindered by the fact that in handling a subject in itself involved and subtle he has also sought applause for his acumen and sometimes for his richness of expression – a mannerism which likewise marks the writing of Budé in his *De asse*. But this disadvantage becomes easier to handle once you have become accustomed to it. For as you may have difficulty understanding certain speakers unless you hear them with some frequency, and as a type of music is less enjoyable for the very reason that it is new and unusual, so because each author has his own style that style becomes more familiar and therefore more pleasing by our becoming accustomed to it. Indeed even Titus Livy, the most pleasing of writers, is at first taste somewhat bitter. This happens, however, chiefly in the case of those authors who, aside from what I might call their individual flavour, bring to their work a capacity for taking pains and a striving for subtlety. Among orators of this kind Quintilian especially ought to be classed, and among poets, Horace.

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[30] *Letters* 58.10

[31] *De Trinitate* 1.18

[32] The historian and hagiographer Sulpicius Severus of Acquitaine (c 360–c 420) was the author of a life of St Martin of Tours and of a universal chronicle.

[33] See Ep 676 introduction.

[34] Ep 1328

It appears that St Jerome perceived this. He writes as follows in a letter to a Roman orator: 'Hilary, a confessor of my times and a bishop, imitated the twelve books of Quintilian both in style and in number.'[35] It is most difficult, however, for the man who either teaches the rules of an art or offers arguments on matters naturally subtle to combine a concern for polished style with clear expression. In addition to these difficulties Quintilian also strove for brevity. When I consider the varied diction of the ancient writers it seems that hardly any provincials successfully reproduce the simplicity of Roman speech except the few who were educated at Rome from boyhood. For both Tertullian and Apuleius have a style of their own, and in the decrees of the Africans, many of which Augustine refers to against Petilianus and Cresconius,[36] you may observe an anxious striving for eloquence, but such is their style that you recognize their African origin. Augustine also sometimes is rather obscure and laboured, nor is Cyprian entirely without African traits, although he is clearer than the others. Nor is it strange if a Gaul reflects something Gallic or a Carthaginian something Carthaginian when traces of Paduan idiom in Livy's Latin is offensive to some. Generally, however, the striving is greater in one whose command of a language is characteristic of provincials rather than citizens and who is a foreigner rather than native-born. Undoubtedly this is why that old woman, as the story goes, called Theophrastus a 'foreigner' because his language was too Attic.[37]

Nevertheless, it seems to me indeed that St Jerome is misusing the term 'imitated' for one who is like or resembles another. For the child is like

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[35] *Letters* 70.5. Like Hilary's *De Trinitate*, Quintilian's *Institutiones oratoriae* had twelve books.

[36] *Contra litteras Petiliani libri tres; Contra Cresconium grammaticum et Donatistam libri iv*

[37] Cicero *Brutus* 172; Quintilian 8.1.2

or resembles the parent rather than imitates him. But it is nature which in the production of offspring more truly imitates now the father, now the mother, now the grandfather or grandmother, now the aunt or uncle. Accordingly, imitation is a matter of effort, likeness is a result. Nor do we always resemble that which we imitate, and sometimes resemblance is unwitting. Moreover, though perhaps it may not be improper to emulate Quintilian's style, yet it would rightly seem characteristic of what I might call an over-anxious scrupulosity even to have aimed at the same number of books, especially when the subject was different. For the rest, as Hilary is unlike Quintilian in the fullness of style (for he continually repeats and hammers home the same idea in different words), so he is almost in distress in imitating a concern for order, spending no little time in promising what he is going to say and in repeating what he has said (in this indeed he is more like Aristotle than Quintilian), and spending much time in devising transitions to make neat connections between the various parts and much time apologizing when, as the occasion arises, he touched on a topic which according to the division of contents he promised should have been treated in another place. In two respects he recalls Pliny, who wrote a history of the world, first because of a preface which is too elaborate, secondly because he intended the first book, which, it appears, he wrote last, to be a catalogue of the entire work.

And so much for the work bearing the title *De Trinitate. De synodis* follows it and treats the same subject in another way. For it reports on those assemblies of bishops in which the heresy of the Arians was condemned. He wrote this work for the bishops of Gaul, congratulating them for holding back from the Arian faction amid such great confusion in the world. He translates it, as he himself testifies, from the Greek; he takes the liberty, however, of avoiding everywhere a word-for-word translation and only renders the thought, and where the opportunity presents itself he mixes in his own ingredients. He allows himself this liberty also in discussing the Psalms, as we shall soon explain in its proper place. Furthermore, although this book restates the synodal decisions, he nevertheless seeks to avoid the risk of defending them, not so much, I think, because he lacked confidence in those for whom he was writing *De synodis* or because there were certain propositions of which he did not fully approve, but because of what I might call a scrupulous concern to avoid strong assertions, a concern which little by little we have so forgotten that nothing causes shame. For thus generally in the affairs of men a situation from modest beginnings gains greater significance until it proliferates into something evil. St Hilary at the end of the twelfth book of *De Trinitate* does not dare to make any pronouncement about the Holy Spirit except that he is the Spirit of God – and it was unlikely that he would have dared to say this unless he had read it in Paul: he does not dare to use the word 'creature' because he has not read it anywhere in Holy Scripture.[38]

This kind of profession would not be sufficient in this age because the needful diligence of the ancient Fathers has been very instructive for us, but we are carried far beyond what is needful. Once faith was more a matter of a way of life than of a profession of articles. Soon necessity inspired the imposition of articles, but these were few, and apostolic in their moderation. Then the wickedness of the heretics made for a more precise examination of the sacred books, and intransigence necessitated the definition of certain matters by the authority of synods. Finally faith began to reside in the written word rather than in the soul, and there were almost as many faiths as men.[39] Articles increased, but sincerity decreased: contention boiled over, charity grew cold. The teachings of Christ, which in former times were not touched by the clash of words, began to depend on the support of philosophy: this was the first step of the church on the downward path. There was an increase of wealth and an accretion of power. Furthermore, the intervention of imperial authority in this situation did not improve much the purity of faith. At length the consequence of all this was sophistical controversy and the eruption of thousands of articles. And then it became a matter of intimidation and threats. Although life may abandon us, although faith may be more on our lips than in our hearts, although that genuine understanding of Holy Scripture may fail us, yet we force men by intimidation to believe what they do not believe, to love what they do not love, and to understand what they do not understand. Compulsion is incompatible with sincerity, and nothing is pleasing to Christ unless it is voluntary.[40] St Jerome calls to mind this work in a letter to Florentius, in these words: 'I ask that you send me the very comprehensive book *De synodis* of St Hilary, which I had copied with my own hand at Trier.'[41]

Coupled with this is the book he wrote against the emperor Constantius, who favored the Arian faction,[42] but he wrote this book against him, unless I am mistaken, after the emperor had died. For he is reproached in strong terms, whereas two other books addressed to the same man[43] – one written when he was alive; the other, it is believed, he also presented to him – are milder in tone. St Jerome recalls this in the *Catalogus* [*scriptorum ecclesiasticorum*]: 'Also there is that essay of his addressed to Constantius which he had presented to him when he was living in Constantinople. There is another one against Constantius which he wrote after his death.'[44] So much for Jerome. The harsher tone of the work against the deceased was due to religious devotion, the milder tone of his plea to the living was inspired by Christian prudence, which prefers to cure an evil, should the opportunity be offered, rather than to aggravate it. But none of these books in my opinion should be considered finished. For although they promise a piece of work complete and developed in detail they do not fulfill their promise, but suddenly as it were they fall silent. Because of the similarity of subject-matter there is joined to these an epistle written against Auxentius, whom he prosecuted for his involvement in the Arian heresy at Milan.[45] The epistle of Auxentius in which he offers a defence of himself to the emperors Valentinian and Valens accompanies it.

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[38] This last sentence was one of those criticized at the Valladolid conference in 1527; Bataillon 277.

[39] An echo of Terence's 'Quot homines, tot sententiae' (*Phormio* 454)

[40] In the copy of the Hilary edition which Erasmus sent to Jean de Carondelet (Houghton Library, Harvard University, *fNC5/Er153/523h/[A]), the entire passage beginning with the words 'The teachings of Christ' (line 394) was at one time obliterated. There is no reason to suppose that this was done by Carondelet himself, with whom Erasmus continued to have good relations.

[41] *Letters* 5.2

[42] *Contra Constantium imperatorem*. The emperor in question was Constantius II (d 361).

During my discussion of the foregoing the thought struck me in passing that perhaps some will be astonished that Hilary has scarcely anything to say about the Holy Spirit, although the aim of so many books and so much zeal and efforts and so many arguments, decisions, and anathemas is to make us believe that the Son is true God and of the same essence, or, as Hilary several times says, of the same genus and nature as the Father – the Greeks use the term ὁμοούσιον (that is, equal in power, wisdom, goodness, eternity, immortality, and all other attributes) – and although the entire controversy about the name of true God, about the term ὁμοούσιον, and about equality has no less a bearing on the Spirit than on the Son. Indeed nowhere does he write that the Holy Spirit must be adored and nowhere does he assign the word God to him, save that in one or two passages in *De synodis* he refers to those who dared to call the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit three Gods as condemned.[46] The reason was either that he thought at that time it was more important to defend the Son, whose human

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[43] *Ad Constantium Augustum liber primus; Ad Constantium Augustum liber secundus, quem Constantio ipse tradidit*

[44] *De viris illustribus* 100

[45] *Contra Arianos, vel Auxentium Mediolanensem, liber.* Appointed to the see of Milan by Emperor Constantius II in 355, Auxentius was a major supporter of Arianism in the West.

[46] This sentence also came under attack at the Valladolid conference; Bataillon 277.

nature made it more difficult to win assent to the divinity of him who was also human – and the Arians were trying to rob him of divinity, whereas the question about the Holy Spirit had not yet been raised – or that it was the scrupulous concern of the ancients that, although they worshipped God devoutly, they nevertheless did not dare to make any pronouncements about him which were not explicitly set forth in the sacred books. Though in Scripture the name of God is several times assigned to the Son, yet nowhere is it explicitly assigned to the Holy Spirit.[47] It should be acknowledged, however, that the devout probing of the orthodox later ascertained with sufficient proof from Holy Scripture that whatever was attributed to the Son was appropriate to the Holy Spirit, except for the individuality of the person. But because of the impenetrable obscurity of theological questions there existed reverential reluctance in assigning names: they thought it was wrong in theology to use words other than Holy Scripture used and the general authority of the church handed down. They had read Holy Spirit, they had read the Spirit of God, they had read the Spirit of Christ. They had learned from the gospel that the Holy Spirit is not separated from the Father and the Son. For the apostles are taught to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The fellowship of the three persons is preserved in those short customary prayers left to us from the most ancient usage of the church, at once brief and learned, in which the Father is addressed in prayer through the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit. The Father is most frequently called God, the Son several times, the Holy Spirit explicitly never.

And these remarks of mine are not meant to call into question what has been handed down to us from Holy Scripture by the authority of the orthodox Fathers, but to show how much reverential reluctance the ancients had in making pronouncements in theology, although they had a greater devotion to theology than even we have – we who have rushed to such extremes of boldness that we have no scruples about dictating to the Son how he ought to have honoured his mother. We dare to call the Holy Spirit true God, proceeding from the Father and the Son, which the ancients did not dare to do, but on the other hand we have no scruples about driving him repeatedly out of the temple of our soul by our evil deeds, just as if it were our belief that the Holy Spirit is nothing more than a meaningless name.[48] By the same token the majority of the ancients who revered the Son with the greatest devotion nevertheless feared to use the term ὁμοούσιον because

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[47] Another sentence criticized at Valladolid; ibidem

[48] The first part of this sentence and the last portion of the preceding one provoked heated objections at Valladolid; ibidem.

that term is nowhere used in Holy Scripture. Indeed the progress of the church at first depended on purity of life rather than on an exact knowledge of the divine nature, and it has never sustained a greater loss than when it seemed to make the greatest possible advances in philosophical knowledge, yes, and in the things of this world, not because they are evil in themselves but because they frequently involve man in the cares of this world.

Nor is learning evil in itself, but it often begets factions and dissension. The defence of the Catholic faith is put forward as a pretext, and in the mean time personal feelings become involved and the devil's business is pursued in the name of Christ. I do not say this because I suspect anything of the sort about Hilary, which we certainly have found in the case of certain men of his age. Nevertheless, when he was alive he was a man; he did not lack human feelings; he could make mistakes, he could be misled. He had been banished and condemned by Saturninus;[49] he spent several years in exile among the Phrygians, notorious for their uncivilized manners; he was hard-pressed in every way by the Arian faction. These influences and very many others could have played upon the feelings of even a good man under the guise of piety.

I do not deny that heretical intransigence must be abhorred, if incurable. But meanwhile because of our hatred of one error we must beware of falling into another. Let us preserve that self-control, to prevent controversy from convincing us that the straight is crooked and the bitter sweet and vice versa. If this has happened to nearly all the ancients to some extent, then truly I shall not need to apologize for having spoken idly in making these remarks. Tertullian, while he fought too aggressively against those who set a higher value on marriage than was reasonable, fell into another pit in condemning what Christ approved and demanding what he did not demand but only recommended.[50] Jerome fights with such excessive zeal against those who extolled marriage to the detriment of virginity[51] that he himself with difficulty could defend his case in an unfriendly court if he should be charged with treating wedlock and a second marriage without enough respect. Montanus in opposing rather vigorously those who opened the doors of the church indiscriminately to the worthy and the unworthy at a time when there was an inordinate relaxation of church discipline fell into

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[49] Saturninus, bishop of Arles and an Arian, presided at the Council of Béziers (356), which condemned Hilary for having aroused public unrest. The order banishing Hilary to Asia Minor was issued by Emperor Constantius.

[50] *Ad uxorem* 1.3; *De monogamia* 3; *De exhortatione castitatis* 1.4.5

[51] *Adversus Helvidium de Mariae virginitate perpetua; Adversus Jovinianum;* and *Letters* 22, 130

the opposite error.[52] St Augustine in combating Pelagius with all his energy somewhere attributes less to free will than those who now reign in the theological schools think ought to be attributed.[53]

I could mention very many examples to illustrate this point even from modern authors, but it is better, I believe, not to be too wordy in dealing with an unpleasant subject. We now turn to the subject of Hilary, who because of the sanctity of his life, because of his extraordinary learning, and because of his admirable eloquence was the light of his age. How great is the anger with which he attacks the Arians, again and again calling them impious, diabolic, blasphemous, devils, plagues, Antichrists! For already the label heretic is too weak. And yet it is probable that there were men in the Arian faction who were convinced that their preaching about Christ was true and devout. Their doctrine rested on many and important authorities. Some passages in Holy Scripture gave the appearance of supporting it, and rational arguments were not lacking which displayed some semblance of truth. In addition there was the authority of Caesar and beyond that the huge number of adherents, to which by right one ought to have yielded if the majority were always the better side. Finally, it was a controversy about matters far beyond human comprehension. I would have recommended that anyone in agreement with Arius be admonished and instructed, but I would not immediately have called him Satan or Antichrist.

Indeed if these accusations must be hurled against anyone who errs on some point, what shall we do with our Hilary himself, not to mention so many outstanding Doctors of the church – Hilary who in so many passages seems to think that Christ had a body which was not susceptible to pain, that hunger, thirst, weariness, and other states of this kind were not natural to it but were assumed? For he plainly wrote this in his exposition of Psalm 68, while in a council he pronounces an anathema against the man who would deny that the Father alone is called unborn God, as if the Holy Spirit either is not God or is also born himself of the Father. No one may plead that in councils Hilary is simply repeating decisions already made and is not their author as well. For he makes the same statement in his own name in the twelfth book of *De Trinitate*, asserting that the Father alone is unborn God, that the Son alone is begotten, not created, that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both in such a way that he can neither be said to be born nor yet be admitted to share the name of creature, which some assign to the Son, calling him a creature, for we utterly condemn the term creature no less in the case of the Holy Spirit than in that of the Father and the Son. And both elsewhere and in the eighth book of *De Trinitate* he maintains with great vehemence that we also are one with the Father and the Son by nature and not by adoption or by consensus only. Again in the third book of his work, but more in the tenth book, he speaks in such a way about the body of Christ that apparently he thinks that the Virgin Mary contributed nothing of her own except the service of conception, pregnancy, and parturition, although the orthodox believe that Christ was conceived by the agency of the Spirit, it is true, but from the substance of the Virgin's body. And indeed there are other passages which demand a courteous and proper interpreter. But what law does he establish in his own case who becomes so furious with others?

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[52] Montanus of Phyrgia, founder of Montanism, a second-century apocalyptic and ascetic movement that condemned second marriages, found existing regulations on fasting too lax, and forbade flight from persecution. In about 206 the African church Father Tertullian became an adherent of the sect, which had already been condemned as heretical.

[53] PL 44 has Augustine's voluminous writings against Pelagius.

But if anyone should take offence at the ascription of any feelings of this sort to St Hilary, he ought to read the *Dialogus* Jerome wrote against the Luciferians. He declares that Hilary had incurred a sentence of condemnation by the church because of his hatred of a faction which had been harassing him for so long and against which he had waged war for so long.[54] But it is better for Jerome's own words to enlighten us on this matter. 'If heretics,' he says, 'do not have baptism and therefore must be rebaptized by the church because they have not been in the church, Hilary himself also is not a Christian: he was baptized in that church indeed which has always accepted baptism by heretics. Before the Council of Rimini was held[55] and before Lucifer was banished[56] Hilary, deacon of the Roman church, used to admit those coming over from the heretics with that baptism which they had previously received, unless perchance only Arians are considered heretics and only their baptism may be rejected, not that of others. You were deacon, Hilary, and you were wont to accept those baptized by the Manichaeans; you were deacon, and you approved Ebionite baptism. Suddenly after Arius appeared you began to be completely dissatisfied with yourself: with your household slaves you stay apart, and you find a new bathing place.' Again somewhat later he says: 'Let him also read the tracts of Hilary himself which he published against us on the subject of rebaptizing heretics, and there he will find that Hilary himself acknowledges that Julius, Malchus, Sylvester and other bishops of early times admitted all heretics at once to do penance.'[57] But if Jerome wrote these words against our Hilary, they clearly reveal that out of hatred of the Arian faction he had fallen away from Catholic belief and into heresy. For no one ever raved more impiously and more insanely about Christ than the Manichaeans, and the blasphemy of the Ebionites who taught that Christ was nothing more than man was so obvious, and the Arians meanwhile acknowledged that he was God and God Almighty though also a creature but one infinitely superior to all others, a creature whom the Father had adopted into the dignity of the Son and the divine name and through whom he had established all things both in heaven and on earth. I admit that this does not measure up to the dignity of Christ, but what is it compared to the blasphemy of the Ebionites? Yet he who did not accept Arian baptism had accepted the baptism of the Ebionites. To be perfectly frank, however, I am not certain whether Jerome makes these remarks about our Hilary, especially since he fails to mention the books he cites here in his *Catalogus scriptorum*. And Gennadius in his *Catalogus*[58] lists a certain bishop of Arles named Hilary, although he makes no mention of the tracts Jerome refers to. Therefore let this argument carry only the weight of probability.[59]

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[54] *Dialogus contra Luciferianos* 26. Here Erasmus mistakenly discusses a reference by Jerome to a different Hilary, deacon of Rome and a follower of the fiercely anti-Arian theologian Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari (d 370 or 371).

[55] The Council of Rimini (359) was called by Emperor Constantius to deal with the Arian dispute. Under imperial pressure, the orthodox bishops submitted to an Arianizing creed.

[56] To Palestine in 355

We say this by no means to dim the glory and damage the reputation of a very holy and learned man, but to warn the bishops and theologians of our day against allowing themselves to be caught unawares by the kind of thing we see happen to so great a man. First, it is the part of evangelical honesty to interpret fairly the deeds and writings of brothers. Then, if anyone has erred whom we cannot ignore, he should not at once be subjected to our wrath, since everyone errs, but an effort should be made to eliminate the error without hurting the person concerned. Finally, a neighbour should be admonished as we would wish to be admonished if we had fallen into human error. Today we see some who falsely censure everything in the books of others, who vent what I might call their rage against the good name of a neighbour, although in their own books one finds clear blasphemies against Christ. This would be an idle comment if I should not point out in

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[57] *Contra Luciferianos* 27

[58] See Ep 676:21n.

[59] By 1530 Erasmus had made up his mind that Hilary deacon of Rome and Hilary bishop of Poitiers were two different persons. As a consequence, this whole passage was omitted from the revised edition of Hilary which Froben published in 1535.

reality that in the books of certain men, which in great numbers now for the past several years have rushed forth from every quarter as champions of the majesty of the pope, there are notions openly insulting to Christ which at the same time give strong support to the dignity of a human being. If the actual facts should not provide conclusive confirmation for this, I would be an unreliable witness.

I do not condemn the zeal of those who with moderation defend the authority of the pope against the seditious impudence of certain men; nevertheless I would prefer that the glory of Christ so flourish that it eclipse the glory of all the world, even of Peter and Paul, should it be possible, not only of the Roman pontiff. For thus eclipsed we would truly be glorious, if we of ourselves were nothing, but Christ were all in all. However, I speak about a few who while they strive intemperately to claim for man his proper dignity have not been sufficiently mindful of the dignity of Christ, to whom alone all dignity is owed. In matters like this, although a Maevius may excuse himself, towards others he is so fierce, so pitiless, and so unjust.[60] What judgment can there be in a matter in which hate is so unbridled? The sword of the gospel's word must always indeed be brandished against all wicked errors, and one should make every effort to combat heresies as they spring up. But this must be our first concern: that what we rail at in others is not found in ourselves; and this must be our second: that we not be corrupted by our own personal feelings and call what is good evil, what is sweet bitter, what is clear obscure. For this is the mark of stubbornness implanted in the temperaments of the majority of men, that they never stop defending a statement they have once made on some occasion or other, even if they discover that they have been wrong. First, shame stands in the way. Through contention it leads to stubbornness and at length stubbornness develops into a madness. As a consequence, while the dispute becomes violent on both sides, on both sides the truth is lost. The error is called a schism if anyone diminishes the authority of the Roman pontiff. But why is no one disturbed when some men, extraordinarily impudent and basely servile, attribute too much to that authority? If falsehood causes displeasure, why does it not cause displeasure everywhere? Finally, why is the assertion that the Virgin Mother is free from original sin heretical among the Dominicans, orthodox among the Scotists? Is this not tantamount to openly declaring that judgment has been corrupted? Is this 'cutting a straight furrow' for the word of God? We gladly use this Pauline word.[61] Therefore, let the eye of him who is ready to take the mote out of his brother's eye be

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[60] Maevius was a wretched Latin poet who attacked his contemporary, Virgil.

[61] 2 Tim 2:15

clear and unclouded.[62] Let us always keep before our eyes the gentleness of him who, although he alone was free from all error, nevertheless did not extinguish the smoking flax, or crush the bruised reed.[63] But these matters also will be discussed more appropriately elsewhere.[64]

The *Commentaries on Matthew*, as Jerome calls them, come next. Others have preferred to call them a catalogue because, I believe, he expounds some headings separately. I do not doubt that he translated this work from Origen; in fact it savours of both the genius and the style of Origen throughout. For although Hilary's work imparts much excellent instruction clearly revealing the author's expert knowledge of Holy Scripture, nevertheless his allegories are rather far-fetched in several instances and sometimes rather harsh, and his excessive preoccupation with allegorizing results in the loss of the historical sense. It is as if there is no place for allegorizing without impairing the historical sense. Sometimes in joining the two (for he also gives his attention to this) he has amused himself, it seems, with his cleverness rather than treated a serious subject. We see, however, that among his innumerable gifts this failing is peculiar to Origen in nearly all his writings. I wish that the man had many imitators of his other qualities as he had some followers even among Latin authors in this aspect of his work. Furthermore Jerome declares that the commentaries which Hilary published on the Psalms were more truly imitations of Origen's commentaries than translations, especially since he himself had made some contributions of his own.[65] What these are the experienced reader will have no difficulty perceiving, for they are by and large the ideas which he had advanced in so many books against the Arians. He himself does not indicate anywhere whom he has followed; however, I think he did this not to conceal his benefactor but to avoid the odium attaching to Origen's name. Ambrose does the same thing everywhere.

Jerome mentions this work in the preface of the second book on Micah.[66] He cites Hilary as having paraphrased nearly forty thousand lines from Origen on the Psalms. One wonders, however, what Hilary's plan was in selecting certain psalms for translation and passing over the rest, unless by chance it was because he did not happen to come upon the complete work of Origen. He wrote, as Jerome recounts, on Psalms 1 and 2, then on Psalms 51 to 62, and again on Psalm 118 to the last. But we have more than the number Jerome gives – namely, besides the first two we have commentaries from Psalms 51 to 69 and again from Psalm 118 to the end, except that the last part appears to be missing in the copies. This happened, I suspect, because the final page of the manuscript codices either had been torn off or had worn out. That page as a rule is lost, like the last bean plant in the proverb.[67] It is inferred from this that Hilary's work on the Psalms did not reach Jerome in its entirety. For he published the *Catalogus* of famous writers[68] after the death of Hilary, so no one can claim that Hilary made certain additions to his work after Jerome published his *Catalogus*. And he testifies in this connection that he heard from some persons that Hilary had written commentaries on the Song of Songs, but he denies that he had seen the work.

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[62] Matt 7:3–5; Luke 6:41–2

[63] Isa 42:3, quoted in Matt 12:20. Although we have translated 'bruised reed,' which is the reading in both the Vulgate (*arundinem quassatum*) and the English Bible, Erasmus actually says 'broken staff' (*baculum fractum*); cf the Vulgate version of Isa 36:6.

[64] See n29.

[65] *De viris illustribus* 100

[66] *Commentariorum in Michaem prophetam libri duo* 2 init

Many works indeed have been lost to us, namely, letters which he wrote to various persons and also a book of hymns. For an extant letter to his daughter Apra has nothing of Hilary and a hymn has far less and not even the character of a song, although Jerome testifies somewhere that he wrote that song. Nevertheless, we have included both to provide a sample for anyone who by chance might wish to make a judgment on these matters. The literary style and composition of Hilary show that he was not infelicitous in writing verse, and perhaps several hymns which the church sings today, not without art but of uncertain authorship, are his, as for example the hymn *De ligno crucis*, which begins 'Crux fidelis' and the hymn *De Ioanne Baptista*, which begins 'Ut queant laxis.'[69] We also lack the commentaries on Job which, as Jerome in the same work declares,[70] he paraphrased from Origen. And indeed there is extant among the remains of Origen a commentary on Job, the style of which has no affinity with Hilary's. In fact the preface testifies that this same work had been translated by some others but with neither accuracy nor learning. They made bad Latin out of good Greek. Indeed, the author of the preface himself makes clear that he was a man who neither knew Latin nor had talent or learning but whose presumptuousness matched his ignorance. We are also lacking that book which he wrote against the prefect Sallustius or against Dioscorus the

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[67] *Adagia* IV iv 72

[68] Ie, *De viris illustribus* 100

[69] The two hymns mentioned are, in fact, by Venantius Fortunatus (d after 600) and Paul the Deacon (d 799) respectively.

[70] Ie, in *De viris illustribus* 100

physician.[71] In it he displayed, it seems, all the powers of his talent and eloquence. St Jerome makes this point in a letter to the orator Magnus: 'In a brief essay which he wrote against Dioscorus the physician he has shown his literary power.'[72] Also missing is a book against Valens and Ursacius which contains a history of the Council of Rimini and the acts of the Council of Seleucia,[73] unless by chance this work was added to *De synodis*.

So much for the discussion of the individual works of our author. Now we shall offer a few remarks in general about the gifts of this most praiseworthy man. But first what point is there in speaking about the sanctity of his life when ecclesiastical authority has long since inscribed his name in the catalogue of saints? In any event, however, all his books breathe what I might call a wonderful fervour of holiness. How great the authority attaching to his name was may be surmised even from the fact that St Jerome, who came close to belittling Augustine and who did not regard Ambrose too highly, often cites Hilary with great veneration, calling him in one place 'the Deucalion of the world,'[74] in another 'a trumpet of the Latin language,'[75] and in another 'the Rhône of Latin eloquence.'[76] And in more than one passage Jerome made use of the example of that man like a shield against those who falsely charged him with consorting with the Origenists, and he accorded him the fullest testimonial in a letter to Marcella, when he says: 'I do not dare criticize so great a man, the most eloquent of his day, who is praised for his meritorious service as a witness as well as for the industry which marked his life and the clarity which characterized his eloquence wherever the name of Rome has reached.'[77] What statement covers more ground than this? And Jerome mentions him with no less respect in his commentary on Isaiah, when he says: 'Do not Cyprian, a holy and most eloquent martyr, and Hilary, a confessor of our time, seem to you to be like trees, lofty while they stood, in the building of the church of God?'[78] Indeed

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[71] Ibidem

[72] *Letters* 70.5

[73] Valens and Ursacius were fourth-century Arian leaders in the West. The Councils of Rimini and Seleucia (359) were dominated by the Arians. Parts of the book Erasmus refers to came to light later and were published in Paris in 1598; see PL 10 619.

[74] *Contra Luciferianos* 26. This reference to Deucalion (a figure in Greek mythology analogous to Noah) actually applies to the other Hilary, deacon of Rome (n54 above), and thus should have been omitted from the revised version of the letter along with lines 564–603.

[75] *Apologia adversus libros Rufini* 2.19

[76] *Commentarii in Epistolam ad Galatas* 2 init

[77] *Letters* 34.3

[78] *Commentarii in Isaiam prophetam* 17, on Isa 60:13

St Augustine also with a laudatory introduction cites not without praise the authority of Hilary in his *De Trinitate*.[79]

On the other hand, Hilary was entirely untrained in Hebrew. Hence if he dealt with anything in this language either he used Origen as a source or he handled it with little success. Indeed in explaining a Psalm he suggests that *bresith* is more correctly rendered by *in filio* than by *in principio* – so Jerome reports in his notes on the traditions of the Hebrews on Genesis[80] – yet the authority of the Septuagint stands in clear opposition to this, as do Symmachus and Theodotion, who fully concur in the translation ἐν ἀρχῇ.[81] It is also at odds with the Hebrew text itself, which has *bresith* and which Aquila takes to mean ἐν κεφαλίδι – that is, *in capitulo*. It does not have *babem*, which is the translation of *in filio*. The word 'head,' however, is also used for the beginning of anything. In this instance no one may rightly ask for consistency in Hilary who, although he highly praises in more than one passage the authority of the Septuagint, from which he thinks it wrong to depart a hair's breadth, as it were, has not hesitated to disagree on this word. I suspect that the passage which Jerome alludes to is in the commentary which Hilary wrote on Psalm 2, for there he notes in passing that *bresith* in Hebrew has three meanings: *in principio, in capite*, and *in filio*.[82] Although this word has been rendered in different ways by translators Jerome thinks that there must be no deviation from the authority of the Septuagint. But Hilary made an even more extraordinary mistake with the term *hosanna*. In his commentary on Matthew he states that the word in Hebrew means *sanctificatio domus David*,[83] although there is nothing in this term which has any affinity with such an interpretation. Indeed in Hebrew *redemptio* is *pheduth*, and *domus* is *beth*. Moreover, it is self-evident to all that *David*, since it is the same word in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, was not inserted here, as Jerome somewhere informs us.

Furthermore he had studied Greek literature superficially, if indeed we believe Jerome, whose comment on this I quote from the letter to Marcella wherein he explains Psalm 126: 'However, he should not be blamed,' he

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[79] 6.10

[80] *Liber hebraicarum quaestionum in Genesim*, on Gen 1:1. See lines 766–8. *Bresith* is the Hebrew word with which the book of Genesis begins. In Latin it is rendered as 'in principio' and in English as 'in the beginning.'

[81] The Septuagint is the Greek version of the Old Testament produced by Jewish translators in the third and second centuries BC. Symmachus and Theodotion as well as Aquila of Pontus (line 760) made Greek translations of the Old Testament in the second century of the Christian era.

[82] The passage in question is found in section 2 of the commentary on Psalm 2.

[83] 21.3, 5

writes, 'ignorant of Hebrew as he was and with only a smattering of Greek, but the priest Heliodorus with whom he was intimately associated should be blamed. He used to ask him what Origen meant by those words he could not understand. Heliodorus, since he could not find Origen's commentary on this psalm, was not reluctant to insinuate his own opinion rather than to admit his ignorance, and Hilary adopted it and discussed it in clear language and with some eloquence set forth the error of another.'[84] So far we have reviewed the words of Jerome in which while he zealously defends Hilary he treats Heliodorus with repugnance, especially since his explanation is only conjectural. But at this point to defend Hilary in passing: it is not likely, I think, that such a great man was so credulous that in expounding Holy Scripture he placed his total reliance on the judgment of another or that he was so deficient in his knowledge of Greek literature that he could not of himself grasp the meaning of the original, especially in the case of Origen, whose language is admirably clear. This we can easily infer from those works surviving in a Latin translation. Yet I do not quite see what caused the displeasure of St Jerome here. For the fact that he gives various translations from the Hebrew by ancient scholars has no bearing on Hilary, who admittedly always follows the Septuagint version, which in this passage[85] has the translation ἐκτετινασμένων.

Moreover, St Jerome asserts that Hilary interpreted the phrase 'the sons of those shaken off' to mean the apostles, because they were ordered to shake the dust off their feet with reference to those who had not accepted the gospel.[86] But if anyone should read with some attention Hilary's commentary on the psalm *Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum*[87] he will find that the case is somewhat different. For in my opinion Hilary calls those who through their own fault have been rejected by God and have been 'shaken off' as accursed because of their stubborn disbelief 'the apostles and prophets of

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[84] *Letters* 34.3, a continuation of the passage cited in lines 742–5. This letter to Marcella is devoted to explaining certain passages in Psalm 127 (Vulg 126), *Nisi Dominus aedificavit domum* (Unless the Lord build the house).

[85] The passage Erasmus refers to and which Jerome was trying to explain in his letter to Marcella is Psalm 127 (Vulg 126):4, which in the old Latin text used by Hilary and in the later Vulgate text (cf n96) contains the enigmatic phrase *filii excussorum*, 'the sons of those shaken off.' In the Septuagint the word for *excussorum* is ἐκτετινασμένων. Jerome criticizes Hilary's interpretation of this curious phrase, as Erasmus indicates at some length. (The new Latin version of the Psalms authorized by Pius XII reads *filii iuventutis* and the RSV has 'the sons of one's youth.')

[86] Matt 10:14

[87] Sections 18 and 19, on Psalm 127 (Vulg 126)

those shaken off' – that is, 'the sons of the wicked.' But his passing mention in two words of the dust shaken from the feet means not that the apostles are said to be 'shaken off' but that the dust shaken off in the case of the disbelieving Jews signifies that because of their stubborn rejection of the grace of the gospel they themselves have been 'shaken off' for the falsity of their understanding. This he also explains more clearly in his commentary on Matthew in the words: 'And by the sign of the dust shaken off the feet let an everlasting curse be left behind.'[88] I might also refer to the words of Hilary himself from the Psalms except that it would be tedious and irksome for the reader, especially in a preface. The fact is, then, that here Jerome either had a lapse of memory or had not read Hilary's commentary with enough attention. Now when Jerome approves the comment of Marcella, who wrote that the apostles were 'the sons of those shaking off' rather than 'of those shaken off,'[89] I for my part do not see what he means, unless perhaps as the Greeks speak of 'sons of doctors' for 'doctors' so the apostles were called 'the sons of those shaken off' for 'the shaken off.' Otherwise the successors of the apostles ought rather to have been called 'the sons of those shaken off,' if the apostles are correctly known by the name of 'the shaken off.' Yet it is not absurd for those who have shaken themselves off to be called 'the shaken off,' just as those who have washed themselves are called washed and those who have dined are called the dined. For so it is that both the dust has been shaken off and the man or his foot shaken off, as we say something that stains has been spattered on a man and a man has been spattered by something that stains.

It seemed appropriate to touch on these matters in passing not only to defend Hilary, but also to show that at one time the holiest men had no scruples about disagreeing with authors however great, and further that even the greatest men sometimes nod, as did Jerome in this instance in criticizing Hilary. Each man is a friend, but the truth ought to be the greater friend for everyone.[90]

Let us now return to the original point. I would readily believe all the same that Hilary did not have a complete knowledge of Greek literature. For as far as elegance of style is concerned he is more successful in what he writes of and by himself than in what he translates, for his translations are more concise and restrained in thought. I suspect that the cause of this was his practice not to undertake to translate anything unless he was free to use his own discretion in rendering the meaning and to omit or add what he thought proper. This is the safer course for anyone who does not have full command of the language he is translating. Poggio availed himself of the same privilege in translating Diodorus Siculus,[91] Rufinus did the same in almost everything he translated, especially in the case of the books of Origen and the history of Eusebius of Caesarea.[92] Even so this is not the liberty of the translator but rather the licence which contaminates the writings of another. Hilary, however, never professed to be a translator save in *De synodis*, any more than did Ambrose, who for the most part drew upon the works of Origen in his writings. It is my opinion that as the Greek text presented itself to him Hilary erred when in assigning attributes to each person of the Trinity he ascribes eternity to the Father, image to the Son, and use to the Holy Spirit.[93] Perhaps he read in Greek *τὸ χρῆστον* or *χρηστότητα*, which is derived from the Greek *ἀπὸ τοῦ χρῆσθαι* – that is, 'from using.' From this *εὔχρηστος* means friendly and suitable to everyday life, and *ἄχρηστος* means useless. But *χρῆστον* or *χρηστότης* in Greek has to do not with use or utility so much as with goodness, friendliness, agreeableness, or, a frequent translation, kindness. Power is attributed to the Father, wisdom to the Son, and goodness to the Holy Spirit. Augustine cites this passage in his *De Trinitate*, going to some trouble in explaining what the term 'use' means.[94]

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[88] 10.10, on verse 14

[89] *Letters* 34.3

[90] This dictum is drawn from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* 1.6 (1096a) and was given a wording and usage similar to Erasmus' by Petrarch in *On His Own Ignorance*. See Ernst Cassirer et al eds *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man* (Chicago 1948) 111.

However this may be, although St Hilary did not have full command of Greek, it is nevertheless worth while to see how carefully he philosophizes about the usage of Greek words in his Commentary on the Psalms, now diligently pointing out their aptness and significance, now seeking the meaning of the Greek not rendered with requisite propriety by the Latin translator, now removing the ambiguity from Latin words with the help of the Greek. And where meanwhile are those who say that Greek literature is of no value in the study of Holy Scripture? Where are those individuals – camels[95] rather than men – who bleat that nothing comes out of Greek literature except heresies? And though they keep shouting out these

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[91] Poggio's Latin translation of the first five books of Diodorus Siculus' *Bibliotheca historica* was printed at Bologna in 1472, and at Venice in 1476, 1481, 1493, and 1496.

[92] Rufinus of Aquileia (Tyrannius), a Roman ecclesiastical writer of the fourth century, translated the *Periarchon* of Origen and the *Historia ecclesiastica* of Eusebius.

[93] *De Trinitate* 2.1

[94] 6.11, 15.5

[95] A reference to the Louvain Carmelite Baechem (Ep 1254 n6), whom Erasmus often referred to scornfully as 'camelus' or 'camelita'

thoughts in public sermons, they are amazed if some persons think that they are in need of a dose of hellebore. Indeed the translation he uses is different from the one which has now been commonly accepted![96] Moreover, since Cyprian has his own translation, as do Augustine and Ambrose, and Hilary, and Tertullian (his is different from all others), it is quite clear that at one time there was no translation which everyone used.

Perhaps it will seem too trivial to point out certain words and expressions that are peculiar to Hilary but are contrary to the common usage of those who speak Latin. For example, he repeatedly uses the pronouns *sui* and *suus* rather awkwardly. Also he uses *tecum* and *cum illis* in place of *iuxta tuam* and *iuxta illorum opinionem*. *Intimare* is also found in place of *significare;* it is found in other authors who are, however, later. He uses *disproficit* several times in place of *degenerat* or *in peius proficit*. *Zabolus* instead of *diabolus*[97] is found not only in Hilary, but one can see the beginning of its usage in antiquity, which used ζὰ instead of διὰ not only in compound words but also outside of composition. He uses several Greek or Hebrew words sometimes with a Latin inflexion, sometimes with a Greek. Somewhere he uses *rheuman* instead of *rheuma*, as if one should decline *rheuma, rheumae* like *musa, musae*. Somewhere he uses the forms *pascham* and *mannam*. Again somewhere he uses *diapsalmam* and *diapsalmae* though in other places *diapsalma* and *diapsalmatis* occur. These are cases in which you may find the obvious faults, but there is the kind that occasionally slips into the text of even the most learned; indeed even in the works of Cicero you may find a few. I say this so that no one will immediately conclude there is an error and reach for an eraser.

I would give several examples of this had I not made notations in the margins where they occur; yet it would also not be difficult for anyone to discover them by examining the index. In his commentary on Psalm 124 Hilary writes as follows: 'After the conversion of the prophet[98] took place, praying that the Lord reward him who had stayed his hand from evil in these words: "Do good, O Lord, to the good and upright of heart," signifying uprightness of will and deed in both.' For he has added *signifying* just as if the words 'After the conversion of the prophet took place he prayed that God reward ...' had preceded.[99] And for the most part the other solecisms are of this type. Either this happens because of human error – the kind of lapse one finds even in Cicero – or he has imitated the Greeks, who use the genitive case in this fashion as an absolute as we do the ablative and who sometimes use the nominative instead of the genitive. This breach which the Greeks call ἀναπόδοτον happens chiefly to those who in a lengthy period hardly complete their sentence and whose attention is focused more on content than on expression. For example, if anyone should say 'It was not permitted to write to you' and at length add 'occupied with various matters' after much has been inserted before it, just as if 'I was not able to write to you' had preceded.[100] Without fault we copy a practice of the ancients when we say *Non sum id nescius, Quoties eius diei mihi venit in mentem, Id anus mihi indicium fecit,* just as if one had used *nescio* instead of *nescius sum, recordor* instead of *venit in mentem, indicavit* instead of *indicium fecit.*[101] There is a similar but a more obvious example in his commentary on Psalm 141, where he writes: 'For beholding his body, which they had fastened to the cross, no one looked for the power of the spirit, which had proved itself divine by signs and deeds.' Here again *beholding* is used instead of *while they were beholding.*[102] I trust that the citing of this example may suffice.

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[96] Numerous Latin translations of the Bible were in use until Jerome's version, the Vulgate, became the commonly accepted one.

[97] Cf Ep 1256 n26.

[98] David

[99] Ie, as if there had been a nominative case for *signifying* to agree with

But indeed I am remarkably shameless in keeping the eager reader from perusing the inspired work by so wordy a preface. I shall come to a close, therefore, after I have made this one request of you, most gracious prelate. I ask that you accept this work of mine, such as it is, dedicated to your name, as a pledge and memorial of my devotion to you. Let others judge what we have done. At least we have made a great effort to place Hilary, that unique light of Gaul, into the hands of men in a considerably more correct and refined form. The publication of his work will have even greater appeal with the addition of your approval, since your influence is foremost in the opinion of all and your sound and sincere judgments are well known to everyone. Your outstanding abilities are one with the abilities of the Carondelet family, which in its abundant fruitfulness has given us many besides the distinguished chancellor of Burgundy.[103] I have known five[104] of them, men of no less cultivation than integrity, loaded with every kind of honour.

You understand therefore what I am seeking. I am of course seeking to

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[100] Ie, as if there had been the personal pronoun 'I' for *occupied* to modify

[101] Ie, as if the personal pronouns were governed by the proper verbs

[102] Ie, the nominative plural of the present participle is used instead of the correct verb form.

[103] The archbishop's father; see introduction. The vagueness of this reference is intentional; see Ep 1345:50–3.

[104] See Ep 1350 n7.

gain from the lustre of the Carondelet name some favour for Hilary, who ought to be held in the highest esteem by all students of theology. For I see that some, in view of the new books which are now springing forth from every quarter, are disdainful of the ancient authors, and to such an extent that they think that both Origen and Jerome, like sexagenarians in the proverb, must be driven from the bridge.[105] Just as men of genius in these times who either invent something new or restore something old should, I think, be above contempt, so it is characteristic of an inferior mind not to accord to old age the honour due it and characteristic also of an ungrateful mind to reject those to whose persevering efforts the Christian world owes so much. For what could we accomplish now in scriptural studies without the aid of the works left us by Origen, Tertullian, Chrysostom, Jerome, Hilary, and Augustine? I do not think that the works of either Thomas or Scotus should be rejected in their entirety. They wrote for their own age, and they passed on to us much that was drawn from the books of the ancient Fathers and examined with some discrimination. But I do not approve of the rudeness of those who ascribe so much to this kind of author that they believe they have the obligation to clamour against good literature happily springing up again everywhere. Diverse are the gifts of men of genius, and many are the different kinds of ages. Let each one reveal the scope of his competence, and let no one be envious of another who in keeping with his own ability and style tries to make a useful contribution to the education of all. Reverence is the due of ancient authors, especially those authors who are recommended by the sanctity of their lives in addition to their learning and eloquence; but this reverence does not exclude a critical reading of them. Fairness is the due of modern authors so that they may be read without ill will, though not without discrimination. Let the absence of furious contention, the bane of peace and concord, prevail everywhere. And let the Graces, whom the ancients not without good reason conceived as the companions of the Muses, attend upon our studies.

May he without whom there can be no salvation preserve your Excellency safe for us a long time, most illustrious prelate.

Basel, 5 January 1523

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[105] In ancient Rome sexagenarians, denied the right to vote, were driven from the bridge leading to the voting place; see *Adagia* I v 37.

1335 / From Johann von Botzheim Constance, 7 January 1523

On Botzheim, see Ep 1285. This is Botzheim's reply to Ep 1331. The manuscript of the letter, which was first published as Ep 20 in Enthoven, is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.105).

I sent you a letter[1] a few days ago by a kinsman of Froben's,[2] the man you call a most worthless fellow, and I a chatterbox and a lightweight, not without reason. In the matter of your divination,[3] you need fear no danger; I shall be too cautious to give you any cause for alarm on my account. I on the other hand appeal to you as a good friend not to allow any trouble to arise out of the letters I have sent you, for I often write to you carelessly and with too much freedom. Your letter goes on record that you will support the pope to the best of your power. There is nothing absurd about the policy, provided the real truth is not suppressed. To hate dissension and love concord is evidence of most genuine piety. But if the occasion should ever arise when you would rather abandon the cause of truth than provoke a breach of that concord, remember that truth must not be sacrificed to any and every objective. Truth must sometimes be maintained in its rightful place and not abandoned or hushed up in a way that might seem to be giving support to its opposite; that is a thing I would think one ought not to do on any pretext whatever. Nor does the truth ever come so close to subversion that, though stated in the very moderate language which is habitual with you, it will be judged revolutionary or subversive by any of those who are religious and

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1335

[1] Not extant, but see Ep 1342:685–6.

[2] Perhaps Konrad Resch (Ep 1319 n2), whom Wolfgang Capito described as 'Froben's kinsman' (Ep 1083:2); or Resch's uncle, Johann Schabler, called Wattenschnee, whose daughter Allen believed to have been the 'affinis mea charissima' in whose honour Froben reprinted Erasmus' *Encomium matrimonii* in 1518. Wattenschnee was a widely travelled book merchant who acted as a messenger for Froben. Bietenholz (29 n30) suggests as a third possibility another widely travelled book merchant, Benoît Vaugris (see Ep 1395), a close relative of Wattenschnee's wife.

[3] Botzheim writes *divinatione tua*, the meaning of which is not clear. Allen thought that it might be a reference to Erasmus' *Consilium* on the Luther problem (Epp 1352 introduction and 1329 n3) or to an early draft of the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A). According to information supplied by Craig R. Thompson, the late Preserved Smith made the more plausible suggestion that the *divinatio* in question was the colloquy *Exorcismus, sive Spectrum*, first published in the edition of August–September 1524 (ASD I-3 417–23 / Thompson 230–7).

good Christians at heart. It is most difficult for you to write anything that will not be twisted into a calumny by someone, especially in such a complex business, which is already so highly inflamed. It is impossible for you to reconcile different convictions on the same subject, which are as violent and as controversial as they are on this topic, by peaceful agreement between the parties; I am much more afraid that if you support the papal case in your desire to maintain concord, you will be encouraging greater danger and confusion. It is right that truth should win the day, it is right to be on the side of truth, especially when conscience is at stake. I know your natural disposition in this regard. You would like to preserve truth entirely intact, if no one were hurt by it – which rarely or never happens. The position will be easier to defend if truth, however mild and peaceable in itself, earns some degree of ill will from certain people than if the truth, which means Christ, is deserted to please men. Suppose this path led to the extinction of truth on the ground that there are people who will find in it a pretext for subversion? Surely passions must give way on both sides, and we must fix our eyes on Christ, who is the just judge and will pass judgment on all things in truth and justice. I know you are marvellously skilled in this art, and our age has never seen anyone to match you, who know so well with what skill one must write on dangerous topics.

Fabri is acting vigorously against Luther,[4] but there are many grounds for suspecting that his unreasonable, or at least immoderate, savagery has been influenced by the benefices and gifts which he has received, though he is conciliatory enough in what he says and has all the fine words which we associate with Italians. In our day one must not attach too much importance to bishops and their tyranny, unless one is willing to contemplate the risk of bloodshed. This is a plague which spreads from the top downwards; and if some cure could be applied to the head, the body and limbs would easily be restored to health. Fabri preached for the second time in public in the absence of our own preacher Johann Wanner[5] (you expressed a wish to know his name[6]). He urged the ordinary congregation and those who were listening to him not to let themselves be carried away by new and outlandish doctrines, but to cleave to the footsteps of the Fathers instead and follow their opinions, which have been accepted from the time of the apostles until now. He brought many persuasive arguments against Luther's teaching, but did not mention him or anyone else by name. His charm and moderation won over those who had been his opponents. Many of the arguments he put forward could be refuted; but so conciliatory and persuasive a presentation does have some effect on simple minds. I agree with Fabri at all points, with one exception, his giving too much importance to tyrannical government in the church. My own emotions are so constituted that they sometimes give me more warmth and violence than I hoped or intended. I wish you would write to him and speak well of me, on the basis that we are all three friends, though he shows himself most friendly on the surface. I know he resents it if anyone opposes his principles. Nobody shall say he was provoked by me into subversion or given a reason for disturbing the peace. But I do wish the two sides would listen to one another, for often a garden-boy can talk sound sense.[7] Our preacher, Wanner, will either try to leave voluntarily – so they tell me – or they will try to find some way to discharge him officially, so far as I can make it out by guesswork.

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[4] The vicar-general Johannes Fabri (Ep 1260 n22), recently back from Rome (Ep 1324 n14), where he had produced an *Opus adversus nova dogmata Lutheri* (M. Silber, August 1522)

[5] Johann Wanner (d 1527) of Kaufbeuren studied theology at Basel and became preacher at the cathedral in Constance early in 1522. He associated with the humanist circle around Botzheim and Fabri and with the circle of reformers around Ambrosius Blarer (Ep 1341A n430). Wanner soon developed decidedly Protestant views, as a consequence of which he was dismissed from his preachership. But he soon secured permission to preach at St Stephen's church and remained a leader of the reformed party until his death. From 1525 he was paid by the city council.

If you did not let Hutten come and talk to you,[8] that disposes of the suspicion that he is taking your advice, but only among those who know the facts.

The rumour has been spreading openly of a great gathering in Basel of men suspected of belonging to Luther's party, in order to draw up some sort of plan.[9] Those monks who are your opponents deserve to be choked by their own spite, now their designs against you come to nothing. Write as you please without a second thought, for you can be sure that with me it will be as secret as the grave; and you could do nothing to give me greater pleasure. Farewell, my dear teacher, and mind you take care of your health.

From Constance, 7 January 1523

Your physician's name is Johann Menlishofer.[10]

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[6] Ep 1331:70–1 and n31 to that letter

[7] *Adagia* I vi 1

[8] Ep 1331:63

[9] See Ep 1342:727–73, where Erasmus blames the rumour on his opponents. Oecolampadius (Ep 1308 n7), Hartmuth von Cronberg (Ep 1331 n23), and Hutten (Ep 1331 n24) had all recently arrived in Basel.

[10] Cf Ep 1331:70–1. Johann Jakob Menlishofer (d 1548) of Überlingen became town physician at Constance in 1516. Like Wanner (see n5 above), he belonged

1336 / To Francesco Chierigati Basel, 8 January 1522/3

This letter first appeared in the *Opus epistolarum*. The contents of the letter require the interpretation of the year-date.

Francesco Chierigati of Vicenza (d 1539) was a papal diplomat who had become bishop of Teramo in 1522. He was now papal nuncio in Germany and had been in attendance at the Diet of Nürnberg since the end of September 1522.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO FRANCESCO CHIERIGATI,
BISHOP OF TERAMO

Reverend Father. In the oration[1] which has reached us here in print, I recognized my dear Chierigati – for I still use the language of one old friend to another[2] – and rejoiced to find that the promotion you deserve has come your way. I fancy it is the same see that Pius II conferred long ago on Giovanni Campano.[3] He himself sings the praises of the place in one of his letters;[4] it is called Interamna, I suppose, because the city intersects a river.[5] I am delighted too at your appointment to this mission, which is admirable and greatly to your credit. May you achieve your object, and having gone out empty-handed may you return bearing your sheaves with you![6]

I would have written at greater length, but I was extremely busy[7] and was afraid that you might have left before this letter could reach you. I have not forgotten your affection for me, and wish I could make some return for all your kindness. There is a most admirable man where you are now, one

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to both the humanist circle in Constance and to the circle of those who supported the Reformation.

1336

[1] *Francisci Chaeregati electi Episcopi Aprunti, Principis Terami et Oratoris apostolici, Oratio habita Nurimbergae in senatu Principum Germaniae. xiii Cal. Decembris, m.d.xxii* (Nürnberg: F. Peyp). Addressed to King Louis of Hungary, the address appealed for the aid of Hungary against the Turks; see Pastor IX 128–9.

[2] Erasmus and Chierigati may have met in Italy in 1506–9, or during Chierigati's nunciature in England in 1516 and 1517.

[3] Giovanni Antonio Campano (1429–77), whose ready wit endeared him to Pope Pius II. Pius made him bishop of Teramo in 1463.

[4] Ep 4 in Campano's *Opera* (Rome: E. Silber 1495; repr Farnborough, Hants 1969)

[5] Teramo, in the Abruzzi, lies between the Tordino and Vezzola rivers at the point of their confluence.

[6] Cf Ps 126 (Vulg 125):6.

[7] Cf Ep 1337:10–11.

Willibald,[8] a member of the city council. You will rejoice to have made his acquaintance. Farewell.

Basel, 8 January 1522

1337 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Basel, 8 January 1523

On Pirckheimer, see Ep 1259. This letter first appeared in the *Opus epistolarum*. Pirckheimer's reply is Ep 1344.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO WILLIBALD, GREETING

I could have no misgivings about you, my dear Willibald, as a wise and prudent person, but some people wrote and suggested to me that I should make peace with you.[1] If only God would put into the minds of our princes some policy that might save the world! These commotions make me ashamed. One might think that Phaethon had been put in charge of the chariot of the sun.[2] And all the time we consider ourselves Christians, and are concerned about Rhodes.[3] As for Zúñiga,[4] I have always despised him. But I could wish that certain of Luther's supporters showed more sense when treating of the gospel cause. I am in very great confusion just now,[5] with the fair coming on;[6] once that is over I will write at greater length. Farewell for the moment. From Basel, 8 January 1522

Your sincere friend Erasmus

To the honourable Willibald Pirckheimer, senator[7] and counsellor to his Imperial Majesty.

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[8] Willibald Pirckheimer (Ep 1259), who formed a highly unfavourable opinion of Chierigati; Ep 1344:34–45

1337

[1] Erasmus had shown publicly at the imperial court a private letter (not extant) from Pirckheimer and had been given to understand that Pirckheimer was offended; see Ep 1344:1–8.

[2] Phaeton, son of Helios by Clymene, having received permission from his father to drive the chariot of the sun, lost control of the horses and nearly set the earth on fire.

[3] Rhodes, invested by the Turks in June 1522, fell on 28 December. The news had not yet reached western Europe.

[4] Ep 1260 n36

[5] Cf Ep 1336:12.

[6] Ie, the spring fair at Frankfurt; cf Ep 326A:16n.

[7] Ie, town councilman in Nürnberg

1337A / To Silvester Prierias Basel, [mid-January 1523?]

The only source for this letter is the *Opus epistolarum*, which gives a year-date only, 1523 (line 72). Allen placed the letter at c January 1524 and published it as Ep 1412. His case for this rests on 1/ the marked verbal resemblances (indicated in his notes) to other letters written at about that time, 2/ the reference in lines 65–6 to dictation because of the effects of a recent attack of the stone (Christmas 1523; Allen Ep 1408:3n), and 3/ the fact that Erasmus dispatched a number of other letters to Rome at that time. The problem with this is that the addressee, Silvester Prierias (Ep 872:19n), had died at the beginning of 1523 as a result of the plague that had raged at Rome in the period September–December 1522 and lingered into the first weeks of the new year; see J. Quétif and J. Echard, *Scriptores Ordinis Praedicatorum recensiti* ... II (Paris 1721) 55a; cf Ep 1324 n12. It is difficult to believe that Erasmus, with his excellent contacts in Rome, would still have been ignorant of Prierias' death in January 1524. It is just as difficult to believe that Erasmus would have replied to a letter that had to have been written a year earlier without commenting on the delay. Indeed, the opening lines of this letter were clearly written in response to a *recent* letter. The verbal similarities between this letter and other letters of c January 1524 must therefore be regarded as fortuitous. Allen's date is clearly untenable.

Unfortunately, it is easier to reject Allen's date than it is to find a new one. The references in the letter are all so ambiguous that it could have been written at almost any time during the period from early March 1522 until the time of Prierias' death (or a few weeks thereafter). During those months, Zúñiga's 'raving,' Erasmus' frequent attacks of the stone, numerous invitations to Rome, and anxiety about the attitude of the new pope, Adrian VI, were recurring themes in Erasmus' correspondence; see especially Epp 1275, 1278, 1294, 1305, 1311, and 1330, all written in 1522. We know from Ep 1342:352–3 that before his visit to Constance in September 1522 Erasmus had received a friendly letter from Prierias urging him to come to Rome. This letter could be a response either to that letter or to a later one in which the invitation to Rome was repeated. If the date 1523 is taken at face value – and it is by no means certain that it should be – then the letter must have been written in the period between Christmas 1522 and the receipt of the *Breve aureum* (Ep 1324), which was delivered sometime between 8 and 28 January. After the receipt of that letter, Erasmus would scarcely have expressed himself as cautiously on the attitude of Adrian VI as he does in lines 68–9. Moreover, we can assume that in January Erasmus was still ignorant of Prierias' death, and we know that Zúñiga was on his mind at that time (Ep 1341A:868ff). There is no independent documentation of an attack of the stone in the period from Christmas 1522 to 28 January 1523. However, in view of the many documented attacks throughout 1522 (Ep 1267 n5) and again in 1523 starting c February (Ep 1353:30–2), such an attack in January cannot be ruled out. We have therefore decided to place the letter conjecturally at 'mid-January 1523,' believing that it could not have been written any later than that but acknowledging that it might in fact have been written some weeks or even months earlier.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO SILVESTER PRIERIAS, GREETING

Your Reverence speaks of an unpleasant smell of smoke that hangs about my letter;[1] but what you mean I do not quite understand. To you at least I am grateful on many counts: because you tell me so openly and so kindly what it was desirable I should know, and because you point out a way in which I can avoid the danger which you warn me of – I mean by explaining certain passages; and I should have owed you an even greater debt had you been so kind as to indicate which those places are. It would be nothing new, were some error to be found in my books, a thing that neither Jerome nor Augustine was able to avoid, and especially when men's judgments differ so widely. But this at least has always been my intention, not knowingly to allow there to be anything in my books that could be at variance with orthodox doctrine. In Louvain I spent so many years, and no theologian either friend or enemy ever pointed out anything of the sort, though I often asked them to tell me freely if there was any such thing. If Zúñiga[2] is openly raving like this in Rome, although I am not unaware who put him up to it, yet consider what a precedent he introduces. Suppose there are some indefensible things in my books; what precedent is there, may I ask, for issuing such insane pamphlets in order to mount an impudent and scurrilous attack on a man who has at least never been condemned so far by any authority? In Louvain there is a Carmelite[3] who is plainly demented and insane and almost uneducated, and one Dominican[4] very like him. These are the only two who work against me and make me a Lutheran whether I will or no, though I was the first person ever to urge him not to act in hot blood.[5]

What I say will sound somewhat arrogant, but it is true: had I been willing to write even one short letter professing some moderate support for

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1337A

[1] Perhaps *De esu carnium* (Ep 1274 n7), one of the works most hated by Erasmus' conservative critics

[2] Ep 1260 n36

[3] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6)

[4] Vincentius Theoderici (Ep 1196)

[5] See Ep 980:45–58.

Luther, you would have seen the whole of Germany in a state of exaltation – and that is at least a pretty wide area. Nor would the support of princes have been wanting. Assailed as I have been from so many quarters which I could name and wooed with honeyed words from many others, it has never been possible to detach me from my veneration for the church of Rome. Aleandro[6] does everything possible against Luther; but if you really knew the facts, I Erasmus by myself have done more to break the power and the spirit of that faction than all Aleandro's exertions. I have written so many letters both public and private which have discouraged Luther's supporters[7] –though Luther himself has taught us many lessons which were badly needed – but discord I simply cannot stand. Whether you and other people in your part of the world are convinced of this, I do not know; at any rate Luther's party here are fully aware of it, for they think their lack of success is due solely to me and are now in full cry against me in barbed pamphlets as an enemy to the cause. And such I really am; though I would rather see evil separated from good than good and evil alike consigned to perdition.

And now see the gratitude I get from those who attack me with such outrageous falsehoods, or rather, see how unwisely they conduct their own affairs. Luther's faction is not yet so near extinction as you people think, and I only wish it were, for it spells the death of all my literary work. There are countless thousands of men who give Luther a great measure of support because they hate the see of Rome, and they seek nothing but someone to lead them. As for me, neither angels nor men will make me a revolutionary, and yet these people try all they can to do so. I have the emperor's good will, and enjoy a salary from him as one of his councillors;[8] on him I can count. Here too I have several princes and kings who are my keen supporters, and several cardinals and bishops also. I wish the Zúñigas of this world and people like him with a zest for calumny would leave me to be orthodox in peace. You yourself have never caused me misgivings. Maybe in a letter to Hoogstraten I observed that in books written by you and Cardinal Cajetan there were some things which the Paris theologians disapproved of.[9] At that date he had written nothing except an attack on the Council of Pisa[10] –no more had you, except a little in opposition to Luther's first conclusions.[11] On

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[6] Ep 1256 n11

[7] See Ep 1352:72–8.

[8] See Ep 370:18n.

[9] Ep 1006:153–6

[10] See Ep 256:49n.

[11] This is not true. Long before writing *In presumptuosas Martini Lutheri conclusiones de potestate papae dialogus* (June 1518) in response to Luther's Ninety-five Theses,

the writings of men like you two it is not for me to pass judgment; but the opinions of the learned are more accessible here than in your part of the world.

I have dictated this with difficulty to my secretary, in such a state with calculus and digestive troubles that I was even tired of life. I should like to be in Rome even if it cost half my worldly goods, and I shall come if my health can stand it. The pope's attitude to me gives me no anxiety. He is not the man to listen habitually to such calumnies. I shall make sure that he has no fault to find with me as a man of good will. My best wishes to your Reverence, to whom I profess myself entirely devoted.

Basel, 1523

1338 / From Adrian VI — Rome, 23 January 1523

First published in the *Exomologesis* (Basel: Froben 1524), this is Pope Adrian's reply to Ep 1329. It was delivered to Erasmus in Basel (c 11 March), after his return from a brief visit to Freiburg; see Ep 1353:249–50. Erasmus' reply is Ep 1352. On Pope Adrian himself, see Ep 1304.

FROM POPE ADRIAN VI

Beloved son, greeting and apostolic benediction. We received a few days ago the letter you wrote to us from Basel on 22 December together with a second copy, in an elegant and costly binding, of the text of Arnobius which you have revised and published with a dedication to ourselves, since you had not yet ascertained whether the copy you sent at first had reached us safely. These two things filled us with heartfelt joy in the Lord almost passing belief. For your gift in itself, as we can well believe from the long letter which you have prefixed to your work,[1] and can detect from the little that our various occupations have hitherto left us time to read, is of a kind that should give great satisfaction to all scholars on its own merits, apart from the fact that it has been put to the proof and published by you; and your letter[2] on the face of it gives such evidence of your sincerity, your piety, your zeal in God's service, your religious feeling, and your devoted obedience to us and to the see of St Peter which we hold that, had unfriendly report of you, from which outstanding men are never free, caused any adverse

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Prierias had published a number of works, beginning with a *Compendium dialectice* in 1496.

1338

[1] Ep 1304

[2] Ie, Ep 1329

suspicion of your integrity to enter our mind, it would have been removed entirely by this letter. We would therefore have you entirely believe that it has added very great weight to the good will with which we have always followed your progress, for the sake of our common country and of the studies and way of life which we both share,[3] and no less for the many and various gifts of mind and character which the giver of all good things has lodged within you.

But the most truly welcome thing in it was your promise of a policy by which the disorder and confusion of the times we live in might, as you say, be extinguished in such a way that it may never sprout again with any ease;[4] and we urge you in the Lord and require of you with all the weight at our command and in abundance of charity that you take steps to explain to us, so far as the Lord has so enabled you, the means and methods by which this terrible plague may be removed from the heart of our country while it can still be remedied, a thing which we should desire more ardently than anything else under the sun. The reason for this is not the threat which this fierce tempest seems to aim at our authority and power so far as we are particularly concerned, for neither of these did we ever desire and did indeed very greatly fear them both when they were offered to us not of our own seeking and would certainly (God is our witness) have refused them, had we not feared thereby to offend God and lay a weight upon our conscience. It is rather that we see so many thousands of souls, redeemed by the blood of Christ and entrusted to our pastoral care, who are moreover of our own native country in the flesh, being dragged straight to perdition in hope of the liberty of the gospel, but really it will be the tyranny of the evil one.

The greater the speed and secrecy with which you can expound to us your policy in this regard, the greater the service you will render to God and the more we shall be pleased. Speed is required by the common danger, secrecy by the danger to yourself, whose safety we value as we would our own. And although we believe that you must long ago have received a letter[5] from us in answer to your earlier letter with which you had sent the other copy of Arnobius, at the end of which letter we invited you to come to us once the winter is over and the air of Rome purged again of the present infection of the plague,[6] and this last letter of yours has given us great confidence that you will comply with our desire, yet we were unwilling to

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[3] Cf Ep 1304 n2.

[4] Ep 1329:13–16

[5] Ep 1324, in response to Ep 1310; see Ep 1324 introduction.

[6] See Ep 1324 n12.

lose the opportunity of making the same request of you in this letter also even more urgently, unless perchance you should be most clearly convinced that if you stay where you are you are able to serve God and assist his church more than by joining us. For in that case it would be contrary to our principles and policy, by which we seek nothing but the honour of God and his church in preference to our private feelings, if we were to recall you from a more abundant harvest. Otherwise you should know for a truth that you could do nothing more pleasing to us (so far as it can be done without inconvenience to yourself) than to come to us and to come quickly, and that we will take all possible steps to see that you have no reason to repent of your journey and your toil, as we promised in our last letter; and we now repeat the promise. Nor is there any reason why you should postpone your coming for either of the two causes mentioned, for the winter has already started to recede and the danger of infection from the plague has become so slight that in so great a city it might seem almost non-existent.

The business[7] of your city is very near our hearts, both for its own distinction and devotion to the Holy See and because you intercede for it; and it will shortly be completed and returned direct to the city by the hand of its own envoy. Given at Rome at St Peter's under the ring of the Fisherman this twenty-third day of January 1523, being the first year of our pontificate.[8]

T. Hezius[9]

1339 / From Theodoricus Hezius Rome, 25 January 1522/3

The manuscript of this letter (=Ep 11 in Enthoven), which is evidently contemporary with Ep 1338, is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.91). Erasmus apparently replied (Ep 1353:268), but the letter does not survive.

Dirk Adriaans (d 1555), who took the name Hezius from his birthplace, Heeze, near Eindhoven in North Brabant, studied arts and theology at Louvain. There he attracted the attention of Adrian of Utrecht, whom he accompanied to Spain in 1515 as secretary. Hezius remained Adrian's secretary after the latter's election to the papacy in 1522. But for Adrian's unexpected death in 1523, Hezius would doubtless have been made a cardinal. In 1525 he returned to the Netherlands and settled in Liège, where he was a canon of St Lambert's. When he wrote this letter, Hezius was still an ardent

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[7] See Ep 1329:36–40.

[8] Adrian evidently reckoned his pontificate not from his election on 9 January but from his coronation on 31 August 1522.

[9] See Ep 1339.

admirer of Erasmus, who, in turn, was grateful for Hezius' support (Epp 1331:45, 1353:251–2). After his return to the north in 1525, however, Hezius' admiration for Erasmus quickly cooled. He soon took sides with the Louvain theologians against Erasmus and remained an anti-Erasmian for the rest of his life.

Respectful greetings, reverend sir, my dear Erasmus. For many years now I have regarded you with admiration and the deepest respect for the same reasons, naturally, that have won you universal acclaim; and in these words let there be no suspicion of flattery (which I particularly detest), for all your talent you have derived, or rather you have received as a gift, from the Lord who is the source of all good things. Added to which, the fact that we are fellow-countrymen has somehow made me feel I have a share in your esteemed endowments of intellect and personality, and the distinguished reputation enjoyed by you and your works, and I feel I have a kind of right to rejoice in them as though they were my own. Up till now, however, embarrassment and the awareness of my lack of eloquence held me back, so that I have never revealed these feelings and this bond of affection to you.[1] But since reading those letters that you wrote to my sacred master after his arrival in Rome,[2] and especially that of 22 December from Basel, with all their deep religious feeling and unaffected piety, I was seized with such enthusiasm, such heartfelt affection towards my Erasmus, that I have been forced to make my passion known to you, however halting my language and though it can be only in few words. And this I deeply regret; for I would gladly do it at greater length.

But so many and so great are my duties in the papal service and in public affairs that, even were they halved, they would be enough to claim the whole of what brains I have. And so you must consider this a mere note, written with the object of convincing you that Theodoricus Hezius, secretary for what he is worth of our most Holy Father Adrian, has the greatest respect, affection, veneration, admiration, and longing for you and your virtues and your learning, and of persuading you to include him in the list of those who are most devoted to you and always will be. If I am thought worthy of that privilege, I shall think I have secured something greater than if the Holy Father had actually given me a bishopric; and my conscience tells me that I speak the truth.

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1339

[1] Cf Ep 1331:45.

[2] Epp 1310, 1329. Adrian entered Rome on 29 August 1522; see Ep 1294 introduction.

And since it is difficult, not to say impossible, to bend one's mind to embrace the unknown, if you wish to know who I am, Johannes Fabri, the vicar-general of Constance, who ought by now to have reached your part of the world long ago, will be able to inform you;[3] I lived with him here in close intimacy for some months, and often spoke with him very readily of the Erasmus who is so dear to us both. I am greatly devoted to Fabri for his open and unselfish character and his varied learning and (a thing I value more than either) his zeal for the true faith and detestation of Luther's treachery – or should I say Luther's madness, perhaps the most ill-starred, most monstrous, most disastrous thing these many centuries have produced. For this I can think of no other reason except that the God of justice allows this universal chaos because of the serious offences of men, and churchmen not less than the laity,[4] that from distress if nothing else they may learn their lesson and return to the Lord their God, all of them realizing what a bitter thing it is that they should have deserted that same Lord who is their God. This is what I have always promised myself will happen in the end, as a result of this universal confusion in which everything, so to speak, is topsy-turvy, relying on God's infinite goodness and on numerous precedents in times gone by. Nor have I any doubt whatever that Martin Luther, who is now almost worshipped like a god and exalted above the cedars of Lebanon,[5] and who seems to have drawn almost all things unto himself,[6] rejoicing in the perdition of so many souls, will soon,[7] he and all his flock of followers, be scattered abroad, unless he repents, like dust before the face of the wind,[8] and will be cast down into the depths of hell; for that is what we read has always happened to those (and there were many, as you know) who have tried to assert and maintain these same doctrines or others like them, adapted to tickle the ears of the common herd. Can it be that light will not vanquish and overcome darkness, and truth falsehood, and wisdom wicked folly? Though in the mean while all those who can produce any remedy for this cancer that spreads so widely must do everything they can to counter to the utmost of their power this most destructive and fell disease, which is no longer on its way to us but penetrates the inmost vitals of our nation. And you know well enough, if you are willing not to conceal the truth through modesty, what place you hold among such people and what armament you possess for fighting Christ's battles; and so I doubt not that

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[3] See Ep 1324 n14.
[4] Cf Epp 1324:77–8 and 1344 n10.
[5] Cf Ep 1324:87–9.
[6] Cf John 12:32.
[7] Cf Ep 1324:90.
[8] Ps 35 (Vulg 34):5

you are already preparing some great, exceptional, effective stroke, which these longing eyes of mine will see, I hope, before many months are out.

But see how far my zeal has carried me away, when at the outset I had determined to write only a very short letter. Not but what this is nothing compared to what I should wish to say to my Erasmus face to face; and if, as I hope, I am fortunate enough to do so, I shall count it not the least among my blessings. But why do I speak of myself, when the Holy Father and all good men and good scholars here would say the same? However it may turn out, my beloved Erasmus can always count on me as entirely his, whether for friendship or service or the advancement of his fortunes. Long may he live, I pray, in health and wealth, to be a blessing to the human race.

Rome, 25 January 1522

Yours, for what little he is worth or ever will be, T. Hezius, secretary to our lord the pope

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1340 / From Duke George of Saxony Dresden, 25 January 1523

This letter, Duke George's reply to Epp 1313 and 1325, was first published by J.K. Seidemann in *Die Reformation in Sachsen von 1517 bis 1539* II (Dresden 1847), using MS Loc 10300 in the Staatsarchiv Dresden (see Ep 1283 introduction). Like Ep 1313, this letter was intercepted, and Erasmus did not see it until more than a year later, when the duke enclosed a copy of it with Ep 1448. For details, see Ep 1313 introduction. Erasmus responded with Epp 1499 and 1526.

GEORGE, BY THE GRACE OF GOD DUKE OF SAXONY,
LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA, AND MARGRAVE OF MEISSEN,
TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, THEOLOGIAN, GRACE AND FAVOUR

Your suspicion, most learned Erasmus, that the letter[1] of which you have sent a fresh copy[2] was intercepted, is correct. Previously it was not delivered; but what the reason was is not clear to us. As it is, that you should be so anxious to evade the task of writing against Luther and should decline to do so does not at all surprise us, now we have learned that you find so many good things in what he writes, for which you are anxious, and the main part of it moreover truly Christian, and that you think that to bring peace in this sad business there is no better way than silence. In consequence, and more especially since we too in particular have been

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1340

[1] Ep 1313

[2] With Ep 1325

grossly insulted by him,[3] we shall cease in future to urge you to undertake what you have so many reasons for declining; for we would not be thought to be eager for revenge of some sort or to roll a stone against the torrent. We should not have supposed, had we not been informed by yourself, that you, who now reside, as you often have before, in Upper Germany, are ignorant of the language,[4] and that therefore it served no purpose to send you the pamphlets. We suspect however that you received them in the spirit in which they were sent you.

Farewell. From our castle in Dresden, 25 January in the year of our Lord 1523

To our trusty and well-beloved Erasmus of Rotterdam, the most learned theologian

1341 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Basel, 28 January 1522/3

On Pirckheimer, see Ep 1259. Like Ep 1259, this letter was first published in the *Pirckheimeri Opera*. The year-date is indicated by the reference to the paraphrase on John. Pirckheimer's reply is Ep 1344.

Nothing could have given me more pleasure than your letter,[1] dear Willibald my honourable friend. Just at this moment, being extremely busy,[2] I will tell you briefly what I want. Everyone knows what a debt liberal studies owe to Froben, the only man who is devoted to our interests at his own expense; but, potters being what they are,[3] he has many hidden enemies, who

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[3] In his *Missive an Hartmut von Cronberg*, March 1522 (WA X-2 55), Luther called Duke George a *Wasserblase* (literally, 'water bubble'). This was a derogatory German rendering of the Latin *bulla*, which in established usage meant both 'bubble' and '(papal) bull,' a double entendre which Luther delighted to exploit in his anti-papal polemics (as in the *Bulla Coena Domini* of 1522, WA VIII 712–13). In the case of Duke George and others, Luther used both *bulla* and *Wasserblase* in a derived sense for 'blusterers' or 'windbags' who supported the pope and his bulls. When the duke complained to Luther about his abusive language (WA-Br II 642), Luther answered defiantly, refusing to apologize and repeating the offensive epithet (ibidem III 4–5). Duke George's subsequent complaints to Luther's prince were in vain (ibidem 5–7).

[4] See Ep 1313 n16.

1341

[1] Not extant

[2] Cf Epp 1336:12, 1337:10–11.

[3] Ie, envious of one another and competitive; see *Adagia* I ii 25, and also Allen Ep 1437:64–5, 222–3.

conspire almost on oath to ruin him. When anything in the way of a new work comes out which they think will be saleable, two or three of them soon purloin a copy from his printing-house, print it, and sell it cheap. All the time Froben is spending large sums on proofreaders and often too on buying copy from the author. This injustice can easily be remedied if there could be an imperial prohibition on the printing of any book of which Froben has produced the first edition or one with some additions by the author within the space of two years.[4] It is not a long time; and the house of Froben deserves support for this reason if no other that nothing ever appears from it that is either worthless or subversive.

There is now at press a paraphrase on the Gospel of John dedicated to Ferdinand,[5] of which I send you part so that you can show it around if you think that a good plan. I do not doubt that the thing can easily be obtained; but it will make a difference if this could be done as soon as possible. If it is not convenient for this to be arranged through you, you will be able to entrust it to someone else. There is with you at the moment, they tell me, one Jakob Spiegel,[6] a special friend of mine and a warmhearted person; or there is the prince-bishop of Teramo, the nuncio apostolic,[7] who with his habitual kindness has always supported me particularly. In this business, my dear Willibald, I have no axe to grind myself; and yet for the sake of Froben and the humanities I shall cheerfully owe you a debt on this fresh head, though deeply indebted to you on many other grounds already. If an imperial privilege cannot be put through immediately, let me know at least that it has been granted, so that Froben can use the heading at the next fair.

The supreme pontiff has sent me an official letter[8] full of compliments

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[4] Froben had received privileges for five years from both Leo x and Maximilian I (Ep 802:11n) for the 1516 edition of Jerome (Ep 396). Maximilian had also granted a four-year privilege for the first edition of the New Testament (1516), where it was mentioned on the title-page but not printed. The pope granted a privilege for the editions of 1519 and 1522 (see the *Apologia contra Petrum Sutorem* LB IX 751E). The present request, which Erasmus had already attempted to present through Jakob Spiegel (Ep 1323 introduction), was quickly granted (Epp 1344:123–58, 1353:253–4). The privilege, drawn up in Emperor Charles' name, bore the date 14 February 1523, and granted Froben protection for all his books for two years from the date of publication. The privilege was printed at the beginning of Beatus Rhenanus' *Autores historiae ecclesiasticae* (August 1523). There may also have been an application for a papal privilege; see Allen Ep 1392:14–15.

[5] Ep 1333

[6] Spiegel was, in fact, not in Nürnberg; see Ep 1344:132–3.

[7] Chierigati (Ep 1336)

[8] Ep 1324

and good will. His secretary[9] swears that it is not common form, but that all of it was truly composed by the pope himself. Farewell, O credit to our generation.

Basel, 28 January 1522

To the honourable Willibald Pirckheimer, counsellor to his Imperial Majesty.

1341A / To Johann von Botzheim Basel, 30 January 1523

This very long letter is a document of capital importance for the study of Erasmus' life and works and of the controversies that they aroused. Written in response to the request of Johann von Botzheim (Ep 1285) for a catalogue of Erasmus' works, the letter is an expansion of the *Lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami index* printed by Dirk Martens at Louvain in January 1519 and reprinted, with additions, by Froben at Basel in March of the same year. The letter, many times the length of the slender *Index*, was published by Froben in April 1523 under the title *Catalogus omnium Erasmi Roterodami lucubrationum*. A second, much expanded edition appeared from the same press in September 1524 under the title *Catalogus novus omnium lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami*. The date of the letter (line 1844) was left unchanged despite the insertion into the text of dates which contradicted it. Many of the most important and lengthy of the apologetic passages appeared first in the edition of 1524, as did the scheme for the publication of Erasmus' works in ten volumes (lines 1500–1832). Following Erasmus' death, Froben issued a third, corrected edition (c February 1537). Finally, the *Catalogus*, again revised, was included among the introductory material in the first volume of the Basel *Opera omnia* (1540), an arrangement later duplicated in LB. Allen printed his edition of the text, with scant annotation, at the beginning of his first volume (pages 1–46), as a preface to the letters. Here, for the first time ever, the *Catalogus* is published and annotated as an integral part of the correspondence.

In our text, superscript letters 'a' through 'o' are used to mark the beginning and the end of the most important passsages inserted in 1524. Thus, for example: '[a]So, for the benefit [line 297] ... [line 421] September 1524.[a]' The line numbers of the other insertions are as follows: b (434–40), c (493–5), d (499–568), e (633–49), f (747–9), g (760–73), h (776–87), i (789), j (890–9), k (912–27), l (955–1009), m (1019–1306), n (1394–1416), o (1500–1832). Small, insignificant changes in wording have not been noted.

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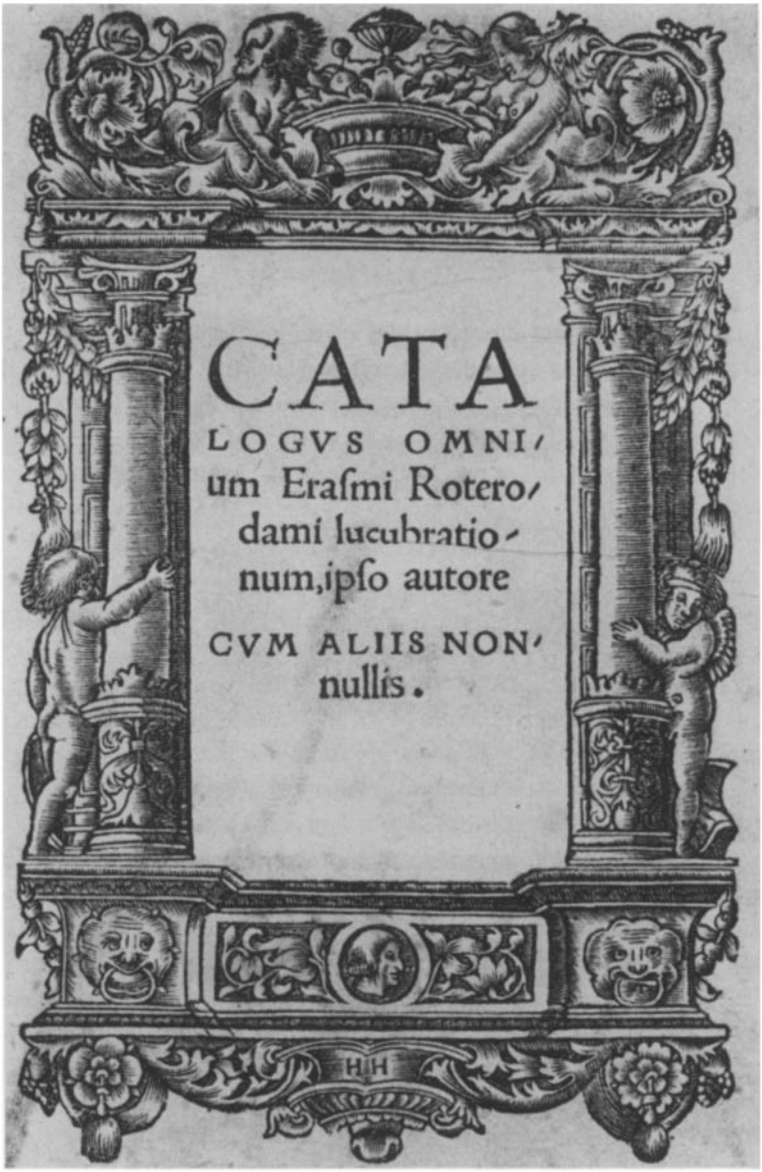
[9] This title should mean Hezius (Ep 1339), but in Ep 1345:15–17 Erasmus attributes the information to the papal chaplain, Pierre Barbier (Ep 1294), and Ep 1342:699–706 confirms the attribution.



CATA
LOGVS OMNI/
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dami lucubratio/
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CVM ALIIS NON/
nullis.

Erasmus *Catologus lucubrationum* title-page
Basel: Froben 1523
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ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE LEARNED AND REVEREND JOHANN VON BOTZHEIM, OTHERWISE ABSTEMIUS,[1] DOCTOR OF CIVIL AND CANON LAW, AND CANON OF CONSTANCE

Unwilling as you are, dear Abstemius my most learned friend, to think that any of my writings should be absent from your library, you complain that from time to time you have to buy the same book twice, when it has been either refurbished or enlarged or revised. You ask me therefore to make a list for you of all the trifles I have published (for that is a truer word for them than books) and to indicate which of them have received my final version, so that nothing may escape you which you do not possess, and at the same time you may buy nothing which you will soon be obliged to acquire in a new form. I will do as you wish, and render a service at the same time by your means, if I mistake not, to very many others. You love to add lustre to your library, you say, with Erasmus' works. For my part, I think your library adds lustre to my books, for it is one of the most illustrious I ever saw; one might call it a veritable home of the Muses. And so I pride myself more on your thinking my works good enough for a lodging in your library than I should if they were laid up in caskets of cedar-wood in the temple of Apollo. I do not suppose they will live; still less dare I hope they may be immortal; but if they have the good fortune to survive their creator by some few years, they will surely owe this to your library. Men will think there must be something in books which that sober judge Abstemius thought good enough for his shrine of the Muses. But in the mean time my own feelings towards the progeny of my nightly toils are much like those of parents towards their children when they have been unhappy in their offspring because they are either misshapen and sickly or likely in other ways to bring disgrace and disaster on their forebears. And in this regard I am the more dissatisfied with my performance; for children's failings cannot always be blamed upon their parents, but no one can answer for the faults of books except their authors – unless perhaps I choose to say in my defence that time and place have been unpropitious. When I was a boy, the humanities had begun to put forth fresh shoots among the Italians; but because the printer's art was either not yet invented or known to very few, nothing in the way of books came through to us, and unbroken slumber graced the universal reign

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1341A

[1] From at least as early as 1507 Botzheim employed the byname Abstemius. This has been attributed to his admiration for the Italian humanist Lorenzo Astemio, but it is far more likely that he had acquired the name because of his noticeably temperate habits. As a student in Bologna he was described as 'abstemius toto tempore vitae suae' (*Acta nationis Germanicae universitatis Bononiensis* ... ed E. Friedlander and C. Malagola [Berlin 1887] 257).

of those who taught ignorance in place of knowledge. Rodolfus Agricola was the first to bring us a breath of more humane learning out of Italy;[2] in Deventer, as a boy of twelve or so,[3] I was blessed with a sight of him, and that was all. Then again, the generation and the country in which you write make a great difference, the critical standards of your audience, and whom you compete with: even an opponent of some distinction puts an edge on your natural powers, and, as we all know, honour is the nursing mother of the arts. None of all this was vouchsafed me, and yet a kind of secret natural force swept me into liberal studies. My teachers might forbid it; even so, I furtively drank in what I could from such books as I had managed to acquire; I practised my pen, I used to challenge my companions to compete with me, with nothing further from my thoughts than the publication of trifles of this kind in print. These facts could not do away my responsibility, but they might well make it less heavy. There are however some points on which I am neither able nor desirous to defend myself. The chief thing is, that the man who hopes to win a reputation by what he writes should choose a subject to which he is by nature suited, and in which his powers chiefly lie; all themes do not suit everyone. This I have never done; I have either stumbled on a subject unadvisedly or chosen one to comply with my friends' feelings rather than my own judgment. Next comes the importance, whatever you have chosen, of taking pains in the treatment of it, of keeping it by you for some time and often giving it further polish before it sees the light of day. But for my part, once I have embarked on a subject I generally run through to the finish without a break, and I have never been able to stomach the tedium of revision. So my experience has usually been, as Plato puts it, that I go too fast at the beginning, and am late in arriving at my goal.[4] I publish in a hurry, and in the nature of things am sometimes obliged to refurbish the whole thing from top to toe. It surprises me therefore to find people, especially in so scholarly an age as ours, who read what I write. But they exist; if nothing else, the way the printers reproduce my works so often proves it.

But all this time you are waiting for a catalogue, not an apologia. So be it! And first I will recount what I have written in verse, for in boyhood my predilection for verse was such that it was with reluctance I turned to prose

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[2] The celebrated Frisian humanist (1444–85) and pioneer of the 'new learning' in the North (Ep 23:58n)

[3] The probable date of Agricola's visit to the school at Deventer is April 1484 (Allen I 581), in which case Erasmus would have been in his fifteenth or his eighteenth year, depending on whether one accepts 1469 or 1466 as the year of his birth.

[4] This is apparently a negative form of the Platonic proverb 'The beginning is the most important part of every task'; see *Republic* 377A and *Laws* 753E.

composition. And in that field I strove for some time before succeeding, if one may use the word success. Nor is there any form of poetry which I did not attempt. The things that have fortunately perished or are unknown I shall leave in obscurity and, as the Greek proverb has it, not rouse the ill that's safely hid.[5] It was in Paris that my indiscretions first began to be made known to the public,[6] for it was there that my friends published a heroic poem, with an admixture of tetrameters in the same style, addressed to Fausto Andrelini,[7] with whom I had lately made great friends. Then there was another in hendecasyllables to Robert Gaguin,[8] whose opinion in Paris then carried no little weight. Then another, also addressed to him,[9] in a mixture of glyconics and asclepiads alternately. Besides these there was a poem on the hovel in which the child Jesus was born;[10] nor do I clearly recall if there was anything else. Again, on another occasion, I published Jesus' appeal to a man who perishes by his own fault.[11] And many years before I had written a poem in sapphics on the archangel Michael,[12] not of my own choice, but driven to it by the appeals of a certain great man who presided over a church dedicated to St Michael.[13] I pitched this in such a low key that it

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[5] *Adagia* I i 62

[6] Erasmus' first collection of verse was published in Paris by Ant. Denidel c January 1496. The volume took its title from the poem alluded to in line 79: *Carmen de casa natalitia Iesu*. Text and commentary in Reedijk 224–43.

[7] *In Annales Gaguini et Eglogas Faustinas carmen ruri scriptum et autumno* (autumn 1495); Reedijk 240–43 (no 39). On Andrelini, see Ep 84.

[8] *Ad Gaguinum nondum visum carmen hendecasyllabum alloquitur musas suas* (c September 1495); Reedijk 239–40 (no 38). On Gaguin, see Ep 43.

[9] *Ad Robertum Gaguinum carmen de suis fatis* (spring? 1496); Reedijk 243–5 (no 40). Erasmus errs in placing this poem in the *Casa natalitia Iesu* collection along with the other poem addressed to Gaguin. It was first published in Willem Hermans' *Sylva odarum* (Paris: G. Marchand 20 January 1497).

[10] *Carmen de casa natalitia Iesu ac paupere puerperio dive virginis Mariae lyricum, altero versu hexametro, altero iambico dimetro feliciter incipit* (autumn 1495); Reedijk 225–7 (no 33).

[11] *Expostulatio Iesu cum homine suapte culpa pereunte* (1510?); Reedijk 294–6 (no 85). First published in the first edition of *De puero Iesu*, a rare quarto volume probably printed in Paris in September 1511 by Robert de Keyzere; Reedijk 291–2.

[12] In fact, Erasmus had written, probably in the autumn of 1495 (Reedijk 227–8), not just one poem on the archangel Michael, but a series of four odes on Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and all angels; Reedijk 229–36 (nos 34–7). Strangely, Erasmus had by 1523 forgotten that these poems had occupied a place of honour in the *Casa natalitia* collection.

[13] Allen states that this was probably the priory church of St Michael's at Hem, near Schoonoven, with which the priory at Steyn had a close connection. But this is based on the questionable assumption that the odes were written in

might have been taken for prose; but he did not dare post it up, on the ground that it was so poetical that, as he said himself, it might be thought written in Greek. Such were the standards of those unhappy days! And though I had spent so much labour on it, when I delivered my poem, my generous patron gave me money to buy a pint of wine – which was about what the poem was worth. I thanked him for his generosity, and refused the gift on that ground, saying it was too much for a humble person like myself. In no kind of verse have I had less practice than in epigrams; yet sometimes while out walking, or even over the wine, I have at different times thrown off a certain number, some of which have been put together by friends over-zealous for my reputation, and published in Basel; and to make them even more ridiculous, they appended them to the epigrams of Thomas More, who is a master of the art.[14] A poem addressed to Guillaume Cop on old age[15] I wrote in the Alps, when I first visited Italy. A bitter dispute had arisen between a herald of the English king, who accompanied us as far as Bologna to give us more safety on the journey, and the tutor of the young men[16] whom I was then taking to Italy under the terms of an agreement in which I was caught like a rat in a trap, not as their governor (for I had ruled out any responsibility for their behaviour) nor to give them lessons, but to keep an eye on them and steer them on a suitable course of study – my destiny must needs be replete with every form of disaster, for it was the most unpleasant year I ever spent. These two it was, then, between whom a quarrel had broken out, so fierce that after violent insults swords were drawn. At that stage I was angry with one of the two only; but when, after such a tempest, I saw them reconciled of their own accord after downing a

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1489, before Erasmus' departure for Paris. Reedijk, who places the composition of the poems in the autumn of 1495 (see n12), believes that the incident took place at some church dedicated to St Michael in or near Paris (228).

[14] The *Epigrammata* of Erasmus and More were published, together with More's *Utopia*, by Froben in March 1518. As Reedijk points out (72, 91), Erasmus certainly knew of Froben's plans and played a more active role in the publication of the *Epigrammata* than he here admits. Most of the seventy-two epigrams had already been published with earlier works (eg, the earliest editions of the *Adagia*). See Reedijk 367 (no 164) for a guide to the location of these poems in his edition.

[15] *Ad Gulielmum Copum medicorum eruditissimum de senectute carmen* (the *Carmen alpestre*), August 1506; Reedijk 283–90 (no 83). First published with the *Adagiorum collectanea* (Paris: J. Petit and J. Bade 24 December 1506–8 January 1507). On Cop, see Ep 124:18n.

[16] The young men were Giovanni and Bernardo Boerio, sons of Giovanni Battista Boerio, physician to Henry VII; Epp 194:33n, and 267 introduction. Their tutor was a man named Clyfton (or Clifton); Ep 194:36n.

stoup of wine, I was disgusted equally with both. Not only do I think men must be mad to get so angry unless they have suffered some serious injury; even more do I regard as quite untrustworthy those who make it up so suddenly after being at each other's throats. And so, to relieve the tedium while riding, I avoided any conversation with the two parties and finished this poem, scribbling it down from time to time on a piece of paper on my saddle-bow, so that I might not forget part of it while pursuing the rest; when we reached an inn, I copied out from my notes what had come into existence. Such is my equestrian, my nag-born and crag-born poem; and yet, born as it was, good judges do not find it altogether a failure.

I have written at various times a number of epitaphs at the request of friends, which it is needless to recount.[17] But some years before my visit to Italy, in order to practise my Greek (for teachers were not to be had), I had made a version of the *Hecuba* of Euripides; at the time,[18] I was living in Louvain. This rash attempt was provoked by Francesco Filelfo,[19] who translated the first scene of the play in a funeral oration,[20] without (as I then thought) much success. After that, with encouragement from my then host, Jean Desmarez,[21] public orator of the university and a very severe judge of such things, I continued as I had begun. Then, when letters and promises from my friends of the proverbial mountains of gold had persuaded me to return to England,[22] I added a preface[23] and a poem in iambics,[24] very much on the spur of the moment, to fill a chance space in my paper, and on the advice of learned friends, and particularly of William Grocyn,[25] who was at that time the most distinguished of the many scholars in England, I offered the book with a dedication to William, archbishop of Canterbury,[26] primate of all England and chancellor of the realm, which means the supreme judge. This was then the happy opening of my acquaintance with him. Having greeted me briefly before dinner (for I am a man of few words, and do not push myself forward), he spoke with me again after dinner at no great length, being himself a man of most congenial manners, and sent me away

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[17] Reedijk nos 12–13, 29–32, 41–2, 62–6, 73, 99, 104, 106–7

[18] 1503 and 1504

[19] Ep 23:77n

[20] The oration, delivered on 25 December 1461, includes a metrical translation of the speech of the spectre of Polydorus. For further details, see ASD I-1 196 n3.

[21] Ep 180

[22] Autumn 1505 to August 1506

[23] Ep 188, 24 January 1506

[24] January 1506; Reedijk 278 (no 80)

[25] Ep 119:26n

[26] Warham (Ep 188)

with a handsome present, which passed, as the custom is with him, in private between the two of us, so as to spare the recipient any embarrassment or jealousy. This happened at Lambeth; and while we were returning thence by boat, as the custom is there, Grocyn asked me as we sailed along how big a present he had given me. I named a very large sum, by way of a joke. He laughed, and I asked him why: Did he not think the archbishop was the sort of man who would be ready to give so much? Was he too poor to bear the expense of such generosity? Did my work not deserve some very handsome present? At length I confessed the amount of the gift; and when I asked him jokingly why he had given me so little, he replied under pressure that it was nothing to do with any of my reasons; but the suspicion had told against me that I might perhaps have dedicated the same work elsewhere to someone else. This took me aback; and when I asked him what on earth could have put that idea into his head, he laughed (and a mirthless laugh it was) and said 'It is the sort of thing you people do,' suggesting that men like myself make a habit of it. This barbed shaft remained fixed in my mind, which was not used to such two-edged remarks. So as soon as I reached Paris, intending to go on from there to Italy, I gave the book to Bade to be printed,[27] adding the *Iphigeneia in Aulis*, which I had translated more fully and freely while I was in England; and though I had offered the archbishop only one play, I dedicated both to him. Thus I took the sting out of that remark of Grocyn's, though at the time I had no intention to revisit England and no thoughts of another approach to the archbishop; such was my pride in those days, however empty my pocket. This work underwent two or three revisions; and I have revised it finally this year.[28]

As a young man not yet eighteen, being weaker in elegiacs, I began to write rhetorical pieces in that form against the vices – lechery, avarice, and ambition.[29] These frivolous things were put out in print[30] by my friends

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[27] *Euripides ... Hecuba et Iphegenia; Latine factae Erasmo Roterodamo interprete* (Paris: J. Bade 13 September 1506); critical edition by Jan Hendrik Waszink in ASD I-1 193–359

[28] Dissatisfied with the Bade edition (n27), which contained a large number of printer's errors and other mistakes, Erasmus entrusted the preparation of a revised edition to Aldus in Venice (Epp 207, 209). It was published in December 1507. Later editions published by Froben at Basel in February 1518 and February 1524 also contain improvements attributable to Erasmus himself (ASD I-1 196–200). The edition published in 1524 is presumably the 'final' one referred to here, ie, the revisions must have been done in 1523.

[29] Reedijk 207–17 (nos 23–5). Reedijk places the date of composition at c 1489.

[30] *Silva carminum* ed Reyner Snoy (Gouda: Allaerdus Gouter 18 May 1513). In 1521 Erasmus authorized Dirk Martens in Louvain to publish the *Progymnasmata* (Ep 1193), containing these three poems and two others.

when I was far away,[31] not without some damage to my reputation, and they would have published more had I not returned. A poem written entirely on the spur of the moment to greet Philip on his first return from Spain was published on my own responsibility,[32] some three and twenty years ago if I mistake not.[33] A long time before that, I had published some verses in a mixture of heroic hexameters and iambic trimeters in praise of King Henry VII and his children, and also of Britain itself.[34] This was three days' work; but work it really was, for it was now some years since I had either read or written anything in verse. It was extracted from me partly by embarrassment, partly by irritation. I had been carried off by Thomas More, who had come to pay me a visit on an estate of Mountjoy's[35] where I was then staying, to take a walk by way of diversion as far as the nearest town; for that was where all the royal children were being brought up, except only Arthur, who at that time was the eldest. When we reached the court, there was a solemn gathering not only of that household but of Mountjoy's as well. In the middle stood Henry, who was then nine years old[36] and already looked somehow like a natural king, displaying a noble spirit combined with peculiar courtesy. On his right was Margaret, then perhaps eleven, who afterwards married James, king of Scots. On the left was Mary, a playful child of four; Edmund was still a babe in arms. More and his friend Arnold[37] greeted the boy Henry, under whose rule England now flourishes, and gave him something he had written. I was expecting nothing of the kind and, having nothing to produce, I promised that some day I would prove my devotion to him somehow. At the time I was slightly indignant with More for not having warned me, all the more so as during dinner the boy sent me a

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[31] Erasmus was in England from the autumn of 1509 until July 1514.

[32] On 6 January 1504, at the royal palace in Brussels, Erasmus presented to Archduke Philip the Handsome a panegyric celebrating the prince's return from a journey to Spain (see line 706 and nn169–70). At the end of the enlarged edition of the *Panegyricus* published the following month (Antwerp: Dirk Martens), Erasmus inserted, along with Ep 180, the *Carmen gratulatorium* ('Illustrissimo principi Philippo feliciter in patriam redeunti gratulatorium carmen Erasmi sub persona patriae'); Reedjik 272–6 (no 78).

[33] Erasmus' memory erred by four years.

[34] The *Prosopopoeia Britanniae* (autumn 1499), first printed in the *Adagia* (Paris: Jo. Philippi 1500) with Ep 104 as preface; Reedijk 248–53 (no 45). Cf line 607.

[35] Ep 79

[36] The ages assigned to Henry VIII and his sister Margaret (line 185) are off by one year. Henry, born 2 June 1491, was eight years old; and Margaret, born 29 November 1489, was ten. Mary (line 186) was born on 18 March 1495, and Edmund (line 187) on 21 February 1498.

[37] See Ep 124:23n.

note, calling on me to write something. I went home, and even in despite of the Muses, from whom I had lived apart so long, I finished a poem within three days. Thus I got the better of my annoyance and cured my embarrassment. There was published also a poem comprising elementary instruction for the individual Christian.[38] This was written in a very simple style; for those were my instructions from John Colet, who just then had founded a new school at great expense, in which he meant the children to be educated and brought up in religion as well as book-learning.[39] As a man of exceptional wisdom, faced with the lamentable state of the times, he chose out the younger generation, that he might pour Christ's new wine into new bottles.

I had begun to translate *Podagra*, the first of Lucian's two pieces on the gout, a most amusing work, but gave it up,[40] deterred mainly by the epithets in which the choruses are so rich; for in them there was no hope of reproducing in Latin the happy formation of compound words so noticeable in the Greek vocabulary, while had I expressed each Greek word in several Latin ones, the point of the whole poem would be lost. For religious hymns often consist of such compound epithets of the gods put together in a traditional way, especially in Greece. Of this kind are Homer's

> Ares all-power-surpassing, chariot-burdening, golden-helmed,
> Mighty-spirited, shield-uprearing, city-guardian, brazen-armed,[41]

or Lucian's

> Bandage-fancier bedward-sender
> Gait-obstructer joint-tormentor
> Ankle-burner tender-stepper
> Pestle-fearer knee-lamenting-sleep-destroyer
> Knuckle-chalkstone-devotee
> Knee-excruciator.[42]

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[38] The *Christiani hominis institutum*, 1513/14 (Reedijk 307–13, no 94), a translation into Latin verse of John Colet's English *Cathechizon*. It was included in the *Opuscula aliquot Erasmo Roterodamo castigatore*, the first edition of which was published by Dirk Martens at Louvain in September 1514. Dozens of editions from numerous presses followed in Erasmus' lifetime. Cf Ep 298 introduction.

[39] At St Paul's Cathedral, London; it opened in 1510. Cf Ep 1211:370–90. On Colet, see Ep 106.

[40] Nothing of this fragmentary translation seems to have survived.

[41] *Homeric Hymns* 8.1–2

[42] *Tragoedopodagra* 198–203

These words and others like them are most attractive in Greek because of the scope they give for humorous imitation, but the Latin language could not produce a pale reflection of them. Of Greek I had a taste as a boy, and returned to it when I was already grown up,[43] thirty years old in fact more or less, but at a time when we had no supply of Greek books and no less a shortage of teachers. In Paris there was only one man, Georgius Hermonymus,[44] who had a smattering of Greek, and he was the sort of man who would not have known how to teach had he wanted to, nor wished to had he known how. Finding myself obliged therefore to be my own teacher, I translated many of Lucian's essays[45] to make myself at least read the Greek with attention: *Saturnalia, Cronosolon, Epistolae Saturnales, De luctu,* the *Declamatio de abdicato, Icaromenippus, Toxaris, Pseudomantis, Gallus, Timon,* the *Declamatio pro tyrannicida, De his qui mercede vivunt in aulis principum;* besides these, a selection of eighteen from his shorter dialogues, and in addition the *Hercules Gallicus, Eunuchus, De sacrificiis, Convivium* and *De astrologia.* Pieces of this kind I used at different times as a sort of modest new-year's present to greet my friends,[46] as the English custom is. I had also translated his *Longaevi,* only dictating a draft; but my amanuensis purloined it and published it at Paris with a dedication to Mountjoy as his own work.[47]

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[43] On Erasmus' progress in the study of Greek, see Erika Rummel *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto, 1985) 3–19.

[44] Georgius Hermonymus of Sparta, teacher of Greek at Paris from 1476 until at least 1505. Among his pupils were Reuchlin, Budé, and Beatus Rhenanus.

[45] In 1505–6 Erasmus translated twenty-eight of Lucian's works. These, together with four dialogues translated by More as well as declamations by Erasmus and More answering the arguments in the *Tyrannicida* (line 233), were published as the *Luciani ... opuscula* (Paris: Josse Bade, November 1506). In June 1514 Bade published a revised edition with seven additional dialogues: *Luciani Erasmo interprete Dialogi;* critical edition by Christopher Robinson in ASD I-1 361–627. Translation of Erasmus' *Tyrannicida* by Erika Rummel in CWE 29.

[46] See Ep 187, which is the only dedicatory letter dated at the new year (1 January 1506). All the rest (Epp 191–3, 197, 199, 205, 261, 267, 293) were written at other times of the year.

[47] The amanuensis was Gervasius Amoenus of Dreux, Erasmus' servant-pupil in Paris in 1506 (cf Ep 209:63n). The information supplied by C.R. Thompson 'Erasmus' Translation of Lucian's *Longaevi*' *Classical Philology* 35 (1940) 397–415 indicates that Erasmus' charges may not be well founded. In 1513 or 1514 Amoenus did in fact publish a Latin translation of the *Longaevi* in his *Lucubratiunculae quaedam non invenustae* (text in Thompson ibidem 410–15 and ASD I-1 623–7). But in his dedicatory letter to Mountjoy (Thompson ibidem 405 / ASD I-1 373), Amoenus firmly denies authorship, states that he found the manuscript among Mountjoy's papers, and tentatively attributes the translation to Erasmus. As Christopher Robinson, the ASD editor, points out, if

These trifles were snapped up at first by those who wished to learn, and warmly welcomed;[48] but when the knowledge of Greek began to be widely shared, as happened most successfully in our part of the world, they began to fall into neglect,[49] which I knew of course would happen, and am very glad it has happened. I attempted the same thing in the *Moralia* of Plutarch,[50] whose style is somewhat more difficult, and there is more obscurity in this matter, owing to his out-of-the-way learning. From Plutarch I translated an essay called *Quomodo sit dignoscendus adulator ab amico*, which I dedicated to the English king Henry,[51] eighth of that name. Besides that, one called *Quo pacto fieri possit ut utilitatem capias ex inimico*; this I dedicated to the man who is now cardinal-archbishop of York,[52] who at that time was lord high almoner but was already destined for great things, so much so that before I had an opportunity to present it to him, I had to change my preface three times,[53] and even so, before it could be printed, he had already reached the dignity of a cardinal.[54] Before those, I had translated Plutarch's *De tuenda*

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Amoenus was telling the truth – and there is no good reason to assume that he was not – then he cannot have been the secretary to whom the manuscript was dictated, for he would surely have recognized his own handwriting. Moreover, the quality of the work, decidedly inferior to the translations published in 1516, suggests that it was a much earlier attempt. Robinson speculates that it might have been completed in 1503 during a stay with Mountjoy at Hammes and presented to him as a gift. Long afterwards, hearing of its publication but not seeing the book with Amoenus' disclaimers of authorship, Erasmus supposed that Amoenus had been his secretary at the time of dictation and came to the conclusion that Amoenus had stolen the manuscript and put it out as his own work.

48 For some examples of contemporary praise, see ASD I-1 367.

49 In fact, Erasmus' translations of Lucian remained popular, were much reprinted, and became standard texts for both Latin and Greek studies in schools; see ASD I-1 367–9.

50 In the autumn of 1512 Erasmus reported from London that he had translated 'several works by Plutarch' (Ep 264:27–8). The *Opuscula Plutarchi nuper traducta Erasmo Roterodamo interprete*, containing the eight essays listed here (lines 16–28), were published by Froben at Basel in August 1514; critical edition by A.J. Koster in ASD IV-2 101–62.

51 In July 1513 Erasmus sent a manuscript of *De discrimine adulatoris et amici* to Henry VIII with Ep 272, which became the preface to the essay in the *Opuscula*.

52 Wolsey

53 Two versions of the preface survive: Epp 284 and 297. The latter was the one included with *De utilitate capienda ex inimicis* in the *Opuscula*.

54 By the summer of 1514, when the *Opuscula* were printed, Wolsey had been designated archbishop of York, but he did not become a cardinal until 10 September 1515.

valetudine,[55] *Quod in principe requiratur eruditio, Quod cum principibus maxime versari debeat philosophus, Utrum graviores sint animi morbi an corporis, Num recte dictum sit, λάθε βιώσας, De cupiditate divitiarum.* These exercises I enjoyed all the more because they contributed substantially to the building of character no less than to the learning of Greek; for I have read nothing outside Scripture with such a high moral tone. There was this one inconvenience, that Aldus printed Plutarch's work from a copy which was corrupt in many places,[56] nor was there any supply of ancient copies within my reach. I made a version of one declamation by Libanius, put in the mouth of Menelaus, who is asking the Trojans to return his wife, and this was my first experiment in translation. I also rendered some other short declamations of uncertain authorship.[57]

I have written several things designed to be of use in education, among which are two books *De copia verborum ac rerum,*[58] which I sketched long ago as a pastime rather than started, to please John Colet, who with great importunity forced rather than persuaded me to dedicate a new work to his new school.[59] At his request I also corrected a small book by Lily,[60] whom he had made high master of his school, on syntax; but I made so many changes that Lily was unwilling to take responsibility for the work, nor could I do so.

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[55] Erasmus presented a manuscript copy of *De tuenda valetudine,* with Ep 268, to John Yonge, master of the rolls, as a new-year's gift in 1513. The essay was printed in July 1513 by Rych and Pynson in London, and the following November by Dirk Martens in Louvain (with Ep 268 as preface), before it appeared in the *Opuscula* of 1514.

[56] The Aldine edition appeared in March 1509. Erasmus himself had helped with the proofreading of the text (ASD IV-2 105).

[57] In the autumn of 1503 Erasmus translated three declamations of Libanius into Latin; see Epp 177–8. Besides the *Declamatio Menelai,* there were a *Declamatio Medeae* and a *Declamatio Andromachae.* Modern scholars do not share Erasmus' doubts about the latter two. The translation, together with the Greek originals, were printed by Dirk Martens at Louvain in July 1519; critical edition by R.A.B. Mynors in ASD I-1 175–92.

[58] *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum commentarii duo,* begun at least as early as 1499 and finally published in 1512 (Paris: J. Bade) with a dedication to John Colet (Ep 260). Erasmus subsequently revised and enlarged the work three times (1514, 1526, 1534); see CWE 24 280–2. Text in LB I 3–110; Betty Knott's translation in CWE 24 284–659.

[59] See n39 above

[60] William Lily (c 1468–1522); see Ep 341:21n. The book in question was *De octo orationis partium constructione libellus,* first printed by Richard Pynson at London in 1513. For more information on the genesis of the work and the changes made by Erasmus, see Ep 341 (Erasmus' preface to the second edition, published by Froben in 1515) and the literature there cited.

To please Pierre Vitré,[61] a friend out of the common albeit of lower degree, I wrote the little book *De ratione studiorum et instituendi pueros,*[62] he having the task of educating several well-born boys of great promise. To this class perhaps belong the first two books of the grammar of Theodorus Gaza,[63] which I turned into Latin in hopes of attracting more people to the study of Greek, baiting the hook as it were by making it so easy; and the work I put into it, such as it was, was so successful that it already seems unnecessary. I had also made some notes, for the benefit of a certain Englishman, on the theory of letter-writing, but with no thought of publication. After his death, I saw the work, mutilated as it was and full of mistakes, published in England, and so was obliged to waste a few days on trifles of that kind,[64] which I really wished might be suppressed, had that been possible. There had also appeared a small book of *Colloquia,*[65] pieced together partly from familiar conversation and partly from my notes, but with a certain amount of nonsense thrown in which was not only foolish but bad Latin and simply packed with blunders; and this worthless piece was given a surprisingly warm welcome – such a game does fortune play, here as everywhere. So here was more nonsense to which I was obliged to devote some labour.[66] At

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[61] See Ep 66 introduction.

[62] *De ratione studii,* the first authorized edition of which was published with *De copia* in July 1512 (Paris: Josse Bade) and dedicated to Vitré. Two earlier, unauthorized versions (1511, 1512) had preceded it; see Ep 66 introduction and CWE 24 665:1n. Critical edition by J.-C. Margolin in ASD I-2 83–151; Brian McGregor's translation of the ASD text in CWE 24 665–91.

[63] Theodorus Gaza (d 1475) of Salonike taught Greek in Italy from c 1435 and translated a number of Greek authors, including Aristotle, into Latin. His Greek grammar was published by Aldus at Venice in 1495. Erasmus' translation of the first book of Gaza's *Grammaticae institutionis* was published by Dirk Martens at Louvain in July 1516 and by Froben at Basel the following November. In 1517 Erasmus translated the second book, which Martens and Froben published in March and May of 1518. See Epp 428, 771.

[64] The original draft of *De conscribendis epistolis* was written c 1498 in Paris for the Englishman, Robert Fisher (Ep 62). The unauthorized publication of this draft at Cambridge in 1521 incited Erasmus to issue the greatly revised and enlarged Froben edition of 1522 (see the introductions to Epp 71 and 1284).

[65] The *Familiarum colloquiorum formulae* (Basel: Froben, November 1518), an unauthorized edition undertaken by Beatus Rhenanus and based on materials which Erasmus had written in Paris for his pupils before the turn of the century. See Ep 130:108–9n; Thompson xxi–xxiii; ASD I-3 3–7.

[66] The unauthorized edition sold well and within a few months had been reprinted in Paris and Antwerp as well as Basel. Erasmus overcame his initial indignation and wrote a preface (Ep 909) for the revised edition published at Louvain in March 1519 by Dirk Martens.

length, by taking more than ordinary pains, I added a good deal,[67] to bring it up to the right size for a book and make it at least seem to deserve the honour of a dedication to Johann Froben's son, Johannes Erasmius,[68] who was then a boy of six and astonishingly gifted. That was in the year 1522. However, a book of this kind is naturally open to receive additions as often as one pleases. [a]So, for the benefit of those who wish to learn and of Johann Froben, I have frequently supplied further matter already,[69] always so managing my subjects that, besides agreeable reading and the advantage of improving the reader's style, there might be some contribution to the formation of character as well.

And to be sure, as long as there was nothing in that book but the merest trifles, it found surprising favour on all sides. When it began to be useful in many ways, it could not escape the poison-fangs of slander. A certain divine in Louvain,[70] who is physically purblind and mentally even more so, detected in it four passages that were heretical.[71] This book had another experience worthy of record. It was printed lately in Paris after the correction, which means of course the disfigurement, of several passages which were thought to glance at monks, vows, pilgrimages, indulgences, and other things of the kind which, if they were to have the greatest influence with the public, would mean larger profits for that party.[72] Even in

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[67] Erasmus himself prepared the new, enlarged edition published by Froben in March 1522. It was twice as big as the first edition and the contents – real dialogues rather than sets of formulas – were far more interesting.

[68] Ep 1262

[69] By September 1524 (see lines 419–21) Froben had published four new editions of the *Colloquia* (c August 1522, August 1523, March 1524, August–September 1524), with new material added to each one. The process of growth continued through six more editions (February 1526–March 1533) until the work as we have it today was completed. Critical edition by L.-E. Halkin, F. Bierlaire, and R. Hoven in ASD I-3. Thompson's translation is based on the final edition.

[70] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6)

[71] See Epp 1299:59–79, 1300:3–157, 1301.

[72] The adulterated version of the *Colloquia* described here was published in Paris towards the end of 1523 by Pierre Gromors (see Allen Ep 1581:414). It was the work of a German Dominican, Lambertus Campester (d post 1538), about whom little is known. He resided for some years at Lyon where, in the period 1516–20, he edited a number of works including the *Opera omnia* of St Bernard and the *Summa theologiae* of Thomas Aquinas. After some years in Paris, during which he published not only the corrupted *Colloquia* but also works against Luther (see n86 below), he returned to Lyon, where in 1525 he received papal permission to leave the Dominican order and join the Augustinian chapter of Saint-Amable at Riom in the Auvergne. There in 1538 he composed an *Oratio laudatoria* for King Francis I. No copy of Campester's edition of the *Colloquia* is

this he displayed such folly and such ignorance that you would swear it was the work of some itinerant buffoon, though the author of this tedious comedy is reported to be a theologian of the Dominican order, Saxon by birth. There is little point in adding his name and designation, which he himself makes no attempt to conceal. Such a monster does not know what it is to be ashamed; he is more likely to expect credit for his misdemeanours. This impostor added a new preface in my name, in which he pictures three grown men toiling away at the education of a single child: Capito[73] to teach him Hebrew, Beatus[74] Greek, and myself Latin. He ranks me lower than the others both as a scholar and a Christian, detecting things scattered all through the *Colloquia* which smack of the tenets of Luther. Some people will laugh no doubt at this point, when they read the praises lavished on Capito as an excellent man and a good scholar by that creature, who has such a hatred of Luther. This and much like it he puts into my mouth, taking his cue for this piece of effrontery from the letters of Jerome,[75] who complains that his enemies have made up a letter in his name and circulated it in Africa in a meeting of bishops, in which he is made to admit that certain Jews deceived him into making mistakes in his version of the Old Testament from the Hebrew. And they could have succeeded entirely in getting the letter accepted as Jerome's, had they been able to some degree to achieve Jerome's style. Though Jerome records their action as extremely and incurably wicked, yet it was the one thing that appealed to that rascally Phormio,[76] being more outrageous than any defamatory pamphlet; but his wish to do wrong was not matched by the ability to carry out what he had intended. The style of Erasmus, unpolished as it is, was beyond him; these are the words with which he concludes his flowery preface: 'So does age warn me, godliness instruct me, while life is yet vouchsafed me, bowed as I am with eld, to purge what I have written, lest my spirit having reached retiring age be laid in sad cypress by my aftermath.'

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known to exist; see *Bibliotheca Erasmiana: Bibliographie des oeuvres d'Erasme* I (Ghent 1903) 364–8. However, there is no reason to think that Erasmus invented the story, and it is difficult to imagine that he could have described the book in such detail without a copy of it in front of him. In the period 1525–32 there are numerous references to Campester and to his subsequent career in Erasmus' letters; see Allen Epp 1581:410–18, 1591:15–24, 1598:8–11, 1603:32–3, 1655:13–17, 1686:52–6, 1697:84–6, 2728:8–21, 2780:57–72.

[73] Epp 459 and 1290

[74] Ep 327

[75] In fact, Jerome tells this story not in a letter but in his *Apologia contra Rufinum* 2.24. Erasmus discusses it in the *Vita Hieronymi*; see Ferguson *Opuscula* 168.

[76] Terence's Phormio (in the play of the same name) was a parasite, an inveterate schemer, and an audacious impostor.

Although the man's whole style is like this, he had no misgivings as he plaited his homespun blossoms into my garland; either he must be crazy with self-satisfaction, or he has the lowest opinion of the theologians' critical sense. It is for them he coins this base metal, supposing them all to be such dullards that they will not instantly detect the patches he has cobbled onto my work. He pays such grovelling homage everywhere to France, to Paris, to theologians, to the Sorbonne, to the colleges that no beggar could be more abject. So if he thinks something not complimentary enough to the French, he transfers it to the English, or instead of Paris he puts London. He adds some offensive remarks as though they were mine, in hopes of getting me into trouble with people whose high opinion of me causes him pain. In short, everywhere he cuts out, puts in, alters to suit himself, like an old sow covered in mud and rolling in a stranger's garden; all is filth, confusion, and upheaval, nor does he realize all the time that he is losing the point I was aiming at. For when one character there says, 'From a Hollander[77] you're turned into a Frenchman,' and the reply is 'Why? Was I a capon when I left here?' he changed it to 'From a Hollander you're turned into an Englishman ... Why? Was I a Saxon when I left here?' And again where someone had said, 'Your dress shows you've changed from a Dutchman to a Frenchman,' he makes the Frenchman into an Englishman; and where he had replied, 'Better this change than turn into a hen,' alluding to the old joke about Gauls and roosters, he changed the hen into a Bohemian.[78] Later on, when one man says in jest that he pronounces Latin in the French manner, he put English manner in place of French, and yet left untouched what follows: 'Then you'll never write good verses, because you have lost the quantity of the syllables,' which does not make sense with respect to English. And when some character says, 'What has happened to the French to make them war with the eagle?'[79] he corrupts this into 'What has happened to the leopards to make them war with the fleurs-de-lys?' as though lilies had a habit of going to war. Sometimes he does not observe that what follows does not hang together with the changes he has made, as in this same place. I had written 'Is Paris free from plague?'[80] He alters this to 'Is London free from plague?' In another place,[81] when someone says, 'Why do we shrink from

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[77] From the dialogue of Claudius and Balbus added to the *Colloquiorum formulae* in the Froben edition of March 1522 (ASD I-3 137 / Thompson 569–70).

[78] Campester's version misses the point of Erasmus' pun on *Gallus* (Frenchman), *gallus* (cock), and *gallina* (hen).

[79] Ie, the Holy Roman Empire

[80] A play on the words *Lutetia* (Paris) and *lues* (plague)?

[81] In the *Convivium profanum* (ASD I-3 198 / Thompson 594)

cutting up this rooster?' he changed rooster into hare, but did not alter the following words: 'Which would you rather, wings or legs?' Again, though he has such a soft spot in his heart for the Dominicans that he wished the commissaries to sit under their roof, he takes a fierce attack on Scotus with perfect equanimity; for he did not change the remark of someone: 'I would much rather let all of Scotus perish than the books of a single Cicero.'[82]

Full of absurdity as all this is, there are a great many passages where the absurdity is matched by equal malice. There is a place where one character pokes fun at his companion for living a dissolute life and yet putting his trust in bulls of indulgence.[83] Here the corrector makes him confess that like his beloved Luther he believes that indulgences from the pope are valueless, and further on without any authority he makes him repent and express remorse for his past errors. And those he hopes to pass off as my own corrections! What strange Atlas-figures support the tottering faith! This is like a man who uses bloodstained clouts to counterfeit a wound on the human body, and then heals the wound by removing his own patches. Somewhere in the book a child says that the best confession is one that is made to God.[84] The man has corrected this, declaring that confession made to a priest is best. This is his way of helping the cause of confession when it is in peril. I have given you only this by way of illustration, though in this kind of falsehood he is most prolific. And all this, of course, represents the recantation which he promises under my name in his forged preface, as though anyone could publish a recantation of another man's errors, or as though anything in that book put into the mouth of any character were my personal conviction. It does not move me at all that he makes someone not yet sixty into someone bowed with eld. It used to be a criminal offence to publish anything in someone else's name, but now to publish such libels widespread, forging the victim's own name, is child's play to our theologians. For he wishes to be taken for a theologian, though the facts cry aloud that he does not know the first thing about theology. Nor do I doubt that this rascal planted his falsehoods on a starveling printer; I do not think anyone mad enough to be willing to print such ignorant rubbish with his eyes open. The man's incurable audacity ceased to surprise me once I learned that he was a chick who had at some time fallen out of that nest at Bern[85] – a real case

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[82] In the *Convivium religiosum* (ASD I-3 251–2 / Thompson 65)

[83] In the *De votis temere susceptis* (ASD I-3 149–50 / Thompson 7)

[84] In the *Confabulatio pia* (ASD I-3 178 / Thompson 38)

[85] Erasmus seems to be saying, on the basis of hearsay, that Campester had at one time been a member of the Dominican community at Bern, perhaps as a novice

of the blackest crow laying the foulest eggs. One thing does surprise me, if the report is true that in Paris there are theologians who congratulate themselves on having at last found a man who can scatter Luther's entire faction with the thunderbolts of his eloquence and restore the church to its primeval peace. For he has written, I am told, against Luther too.[86] And after this the theologians complain that I misrepresent them – I who help their studies so much by all my nightly toils, while they themselves readily embrace such monstrosities, which bring more disrepute upon the calling of theologians, and even of monks, than the most malevolent enemy could do. He who has stomach for such a crime will not blench at arson or poisoning. And this stuff is printed in Paris, where it is a crime to print even the Gospels without a favourable verdict from the theologians! These *Colloquia* of mine made their latest appearance, provided with a supplement,[87] in September 1524.[a]

Apart from that, I perceived that many authors were either entirely neglected or read with very little profit because they were full of errors everywhere, and further, that some of them were in addition more defaced than expounded by the most witless commentaries. And so there too I set myself to do what I could for the studies of the young and, following the Greek proverb,[88] did not try my prentice hand on potting a great jar but started with the school-book they call the *Cato*.[89] To this I added the *Mimi Publiani*, which are witty enough, to be sure, but were lying concealed among Seneca's works under a false title, and not only teeming with corruptions but defiled by the admixture of many maxims which did not belong to the author. All these I provided with notes. I also added certain other pieces,[90] after revising them, too small to deserve record here if judged

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('chick'), and that his behaviour reflected the standards of that community. This would be an allusion to the sensational events of 1507, when the Dominicans of Bern, in an attempt to discredit the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and its Franciscan proponents, reportedly staged a series of fake apparitions in which the Virgin herself vigorously endorsed the Dominican view. In 1509 four Dominicans, including the prior, were burned at the stake. For other references to this 'villainy at Bern,' see Ep 1033:274–5 and the colloquy *Exequiae seraphicae* (ASD I-3 693 / Thompson 509).

[86] In 1523 Campester published two works against Luther: *Heptacolon* and *Apologia in Martinum Lutherum* (Paris: Colinaeus).

[87] See n69 above.

[88] *Adagia* I vi 15

[89] The *Catonis praecepta* and the *Mimi Publiani* (lines 428–9) were both published in the *Opuscula aliquot* (n38 above).

[90] *Septem sapientum celebria dicta*, also in the *Opuscula aliquot*

by the labour I spent on them. [b]In this class one should perhaps also place Ovid's *Nux*, which I emended and explained in a brief commentary[91] for the benefit of a young man of great promise, John More;[92] and to that I added two hymns of Prudentius,[93] one celebrating the birth and the other the epiphany of the child Jesus. These too I cleaned up and expounded in brief notes to oblige an honourable young lady by name Margaret Roper.[94] This was in 1524.[b] I attempted something similar with Aldus, after the appearance of my *Proverbia*,[95] on all the comedies of Terence and Plautus;[96] but here my avowed purpose was no more than the rearrangement of the lines, which were in great confusion, wherever it might have been possible. Then the same on Seneca's tragedies, in which I felt I had made a few successful corrections, but not without the help of ancient codices. The printer's copy I deposited with Aldus, leaving it to him to decide what to do with it; except that I made a fresh recension of Seneca's tragedies afterwards in England and sent them to Bade, who thought fit[97] to mix my material with other people's.[98] Then in Cambridge I came on several ancient codices, and set about Seneca the rhetorician, with great efforts on my part, but the edition[99] proved somewhat unfortunate. For being called back by business to my own country,[100] I had entrusted to scholarly friends[101] the task of choosing out of my marginal annotations what they thought worth using, and they – generously, to be sure – undertook it. But I then learned for the first time that even among those who are thought to be true as steel to anything they have promised[102] there are some who cannot be relied on; and it was useless

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[91] *Commentarius in Nucem Ovidii*, published with the Prudentius (line 437) by Froben in 1524 (see Ep 1402); translations by A.G. Rigg in CWE 29.

[92] John More (c 1509–47), the youngest child of Sir Thomas More

[93] Printed with Ovid's *Nux* (n91); see Ep 1404.

[94] Sir Thomas More's eldest and favourite daughter (c 1505–44), married to William Roper (1496–1578)

[95] Ie, the Aldine *Adagiorum chiliades* of 1508

[96] During his stay in Venice in 1507–8, Erasmus assisted Aldus in the preparation of the texts that became the basis for the Aldine edition of Terence (November 1517) and Plautus (July 1522); see Ep 589:41–7.

[97] Reading *cui visum est* for Allen's *qui visus est* (who appeared).

[98] See Ep 263:13–21. Bade's edition was published at Paris on 5 December 1514. Erasmus' name appears on the title-page while the names of the other commentators are listed in the margins against their notes.

[99] The *Senecae lucubrationes* (Basel: Froben, August 1515); see Ep 325.

[100] Ie, his journey to England and back via the Netherlands in the spring and summer of 1515

[101] Beatus Rhenanus (Ep 327) and Wilhelm Nesen (Ep 1257 n3); see Epp 328–30.

[102] Ie, Germans; cf Epp 269:43, 305:45, 307:14, 334:9–10.

to regret that I had not followed the advice of the crested lark in the fable: Do not wait for your friends to do what you can do yourself.[103] What was more, that part of the copy which had the most notes went astray. Some people suspected – and it was not unlikely – that the man who with a generous show of promises had undertaken this task and shown a lack of honesty or wisdom (I am not sure which) in performing it had secretly made away with it for fear of being found out.[104] For some books I had no codices of any antiquity to assist me, in the *Quaestiones naturales* for instance and the *Controversiae*, and in these, in a few passages, I had added my conjecture without changing the text. In other works where I was able to call on old copies for assistance, I had filled the whole margins with notes; but these notes needed a critical eye. Had I been at hand to help when this book was printed, the unprejudiced reader would agree that any labour I devoted to the text was not ill spent; as it is, I regret my misfortune as much as anyone, and no man can accuse me of deceiving him. I hear that certain people in Italy are working on a new edition of this author in reliance on very ancient codices.[105] I shall support their enterprise to the best of my ability, and shall be so far from supposing their success to reflect any discredit on me that I even mean to collect some credit from it, inasmuch as my attempt, such as it was, gave me a start and spurred them on to take up this most honourable field of study.

After these preliminary exercises, I addressed myself to the New Testament,[106] in which I had made up my mind to be so sparing of words that my plan was to write notes in two or three words on every passage, especially as I had already issued Lorenzo's critical work,[107] which seemed to me more long-winded than the subject requires. None the less, when Froben was already set to print my work, scholarly friends,[108] to whom I sometimes defer more than I should, moved me actually to alter the Vulgate text, and to be rather fuller in my annotations. This work of mine provoked a great many men to the study either of Greek or of a purer form of theology; but at the same time the reputation it earned me was leavened with much ill will.[109] Here too I soon paid penalties that were by no means light, either for my audacity or for my undue readiness to follow my friends' wishes rather than my own judgment. With incredible labour I remade the whole work[110] and sent it again to the printer. Once again I have taken it in hand, for the third time, and supplemented it most carefully, in the year 1522, and this is the latest edition I have yet published. [c]But I have a fourth[111] ready, having discovered while writing the paraphrases[112] many things that had previously escaped me.[c]

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[103] Ennius, cited in Gellius 2.29.20

[104] Cf n101. It is clear from later comments (Allen Epp 1479:86, 1804:72–3) that Erasmus regarded Nesen as the chief culprit and that these remarks apply to him.

[105] Probably the *Tragoediae* published by Bernardus de Vianis (Venice 1522). There was no complete edition of Seneca in Italy at this time.

[106] On the genesis of the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516 and of the four revised editions that followed (1519, 1522, 1527, 1535), see the introductions to Epp 373 and 384 in CWE and in Allen.

[107] Lorenzo Valla's *Adnotationes* on the New Testament (Paris: Josse Bade 13 April 1505), the manuscript of which Erasmus had discovered near Louvain the previous year. See Ep 182. On Valla himself, see Ep 20:100n.

[108] Members of the Froben circle; see Ep 421:50–5.

Then again, I took Jerome's letters, which stand so high in both scholarship and style but were current in a most corrupt text, and corrected them with explanatory notes, separating what is spurious with critical comment.[113] This work I went over a second time in the year 1522, [d]with corrections or additions in not a few places where something had escaped me in the earlier edition. This was printed a second time in the year 1524. In this labour I acquitted myself so well that an attentive reader will easily see that in undertaking this revision my time was not wasted. In this I did not lack ancient codices, but they could not protect me in a number of places from the need to conjecture. These conjectures however I put forward with such moderation in my notes that no one could easily be led astray by them, but that the reader's interest might merely be aroused to pursue the trail. And I hope to see someone with the help of more correct copies restoring other passages which eluded me; I shall gladly pay their industry the tribute it deserves, and at the same time they will have no call to criticize my attempts for, though I made many successful restorations, I was obliged in certain passages to make my own the old Greek proverb, 'As best I could, not as I would.'[114]

For some men are disposed by nature, if they can add to the efforts of their predecessors, to claim the whole credit for themselves; and they pursue the other man with a torrent of abuse if they find him nodding or if in any place he has not achieved what he was trying to do. In such people I for

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109 Some major examples of this ill will are discussed below in lines 811–1013.
110 Dissatisfied with the hastily prepared first edition, Erasmus set to work immediately on a new edition, which Froben published in 1519. See CWE 3 216.
111 The definitive version, not published until 1527
112 See lines 750–73 below.
113 Erasmus' edition of the letters of Jerome constituted the first four volumes of the Froben edition of the *Opera omnia*, published in 1516 in nine volumes. See Ep 396 introduction.
114 Not in the *Adagia*; source unidentified. An utterly banal sentiment in any case.

my part know not which to think more abominable, their unkindness or their ingratitude. No one has stood in their way if they wish to produce something nearer perfection. They maintain that nothing should be published except what is quite perfect. Men who lay down this principle are saying that nothing should be published at all, and that nothing of the kind has yet been published by anyone. We used to concede this to the Dutch, and to monks and theologians, who had as a rule no commerce with the Muses; for the study of the humanities had not yet proceeded that far. Anyone who bears this in mind will perceive that the task I have undertaken is neither easy nor unrewarding. Will Italian critics[115] deny to the barbarians the scope they are obliged willy-nilly to allow to their own fellow-countrymen, Filelfo[116] and Ermolao[117] and the Vallas[118] – in a word, to all those who within these sixty years have devoted their efforts to enlightening the public either by translating Greek texts or by expounding and correcting Latin ones? Those who publish nothing may avoid censure, but at the price of earning no credit; or rather, while they try foolishly enough to avoid being censured by men, they incur censure that is far more serious – or are we to suppose a man less deserving of censure who has a full larder and gives nothing to his starving friends than he who freely and openly brings out what he has and would gladly give them better cheer if he could? Who attacks Ermolao's notes on Pliny[119] on the ground that, deprived as he was of the help of correct codices, a great many things escaped him, and in many places too his conjectures were unhappy? Personally, I confess a great debt to Beatus Rhenanus, who gave us a text of Tertullian[120] corrected in many

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[115] Ie, members of the so-called Roman Academy (cf Ep 1342 n90), who delighted in finding fault with Erasmus' editions and translations of classical and patristic authors and who dubbed him 'Errasmus.' They also found fault with his style and impugned his orthodoxy. See Allen Epp 1479:19–180, and 1482:29–59, both written at about the same time as the 1524 edition of the *Catalogus*.

[116] See lines 124–6 above.

[117] See Ep 126:150n.

[118] Reading *Valis* 'to the Vallas,' as in the original text, for Allen's *Vallae*, 'to Valla.' (Allen acknowledged his error in his note to Ep 1479:70.) One of the Vallas referred to was clearly the great Lorenzo, who had translated Herodotus and Thucydides, among others, and who, in Erasmus' words, had 'clearly made mistakes in a number of places' (Allen Ep 1479:69). The other(s) may have been either Niccolò Valla, who c 1471 had translated Hesiod 'with unhappy results' (Allen Ep 188:38n), or Giorgio Valla of Piacenza (c 1447–1500) who, according to Erasmus (Allen Ep 2422:48–9), had produced an infelicitous rendering of the *Placita philosophorum*, or both.

[119] The *Castigationes Plinianae* (Rome 1492)

[120] Basel: Froben, July 1521

places, although what he gave us was incomplete and still beset by countless corruptions. A man is not defrauded of the credit he deserves who has done all he could in the circumstances and has opened the way for others to produce a more finished result. Nor do we find any critics more unfair than those who publish absolutely nothing themselves and do not even impart what they know, seeming to be jealous of public enlightenment, exactly as though whatever they find that they share with many others is lost to themselves. And if they catch one out in some human failing, oh, the cackling and the abusive language and the tragical scenes! Of all translators the most successful was Theodorus Gaza; and none the less in his books Trapezuntius[121] detected some mistakes, which he put right when they were pointed out. As for Ermolao, great man that he was, did he not make a childish blunder[122] at the outset of Themistius' preface to his commentary on Aristotle's *De anima*, meeting shipwreck (as they say) even before he had left harbour? Need I mention here Filippo Beroaldo,[123] Battista Pio[124] and their like, to whose errors the Italians turn a blind eye? Or almost all those who in the last eighty years have translated from the Greek Diodorus Siculus, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch's *Vitae*, and even his *Moralia*? If we make allowance in their case for the fact that, with such a plentiful supply of good scholars and very ancient texts, they sometimes make astonishing mistakes, why must these people confound heaven and earth if in a mere Dutchman, deprived of all resources, they find things that need correction? Not but what I play the critic myself on my own writings, and have made many corrections in my versions from the Greek, as I mean to do while there is life left in me.

But I perceive, my dear Botzheim, that you have been recalling me for some time now to my catalogue.[d] Suetonius Tranquillus[125] I collated with a codex of astonishing antiquity, and restored with some success a number of passages which no one had previously noticed. I have done the same with

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[121] George of Trebizond (1395–c 1472), who translated many of the Greek fathers for Pope Nicholas v and also Plato's *Laws*

[122] In the first and second editions (Treviso 1481 and Venice 1499), the first sentence of Barbaro's translation has *quo* or *quomodo* for *cum*; see Allen Ep 1479:68n.

[123] Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (1453–1505), for many years professor of rhetoric at the University of Bologna, and editor of numerous Latin classics

[124] Giambattista Pio (c 1460–1540), pupil of Beroaldo, taught at Bologna and elsewhere and edited a number of classical works.

[125] Included in the *Historiae Augustae scriptores* published by Froben in June 1518. See Ep 586.

the works of Cyprian.[126] I have also revised the commentary of Arnobius on the Psalms, a work which I dedicated to Adrian VI,[127] who had then been lately elected pope. I did the same for Hilary, who set me some surprising problems; and these efforts I offered to Jean Carondelet,[128] archbishop of Palermo and chancellor of the emperor Charles in Brabant. Besides these, when I considered the important contribution made to elegance and richness of style by brilliant aphorisms, apt metaphors, proverbs, and similar figures of speech, I made up my mind to collect the largest possible supply of such things from approved authors of every sort and arrange them each in its appropriate class, to make them more accessible to those who wish to practise composition with a view to securing a rich and ready diction. In this field I made an experiment, if I mistake not, twenty-seven years ago.[129] The occasion was this. On the beach at Dover, before going on board ship, all my supply of money suffered shipwreck; this was in those days small enough, but it meant a great deal to me, for it was all I had. The agent in this was the officer (I almost said the pirate) in charge of the coast in the king's name, though More and Mountjoy convinced me that there was no risk unless I were exporting English coin; and I had no English currency and no money either earned or given me in England. On the beach, however, I learned that it was illegal to export any coin whatever, even iron coin, to a higher value than six angels. Such was the price I paid for my first and last lesson in English law.[130] When I had returned to Paris with an empty

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[126] Basel: Froben 1519. See Ep 1000.

[127] Ep 1304

[128] Ep 1334

[129] Erasmus' memory is wrong by four years: the first edition of the *Adagiorum collectanea* was published at Paris in June 1500. This edition and all those which followed were dedicated to Mountjoy (Ep 79); see Epp 126 and 211, and lines 1669–71 in this letter.

[130] The 'English disaster' took place on 27 January 1500; see Ep 119 introduction and 9n. The gold angel-noble (5.157 grams fine gold each) still had a value of 6s 8d sterling (a third of a pound); six were worth £2 sterling English, about £2 18s 6d gros Flemish, and £18 6s tournois. Erasmus had run afoul of a peculiar English law that was evidently unique in western Europe. While virtually all countries had long forbidden the export of gold and silver bullion, most exempted legal tender coins, domestic and foreign, since the purpose of the ban was to direct uncoined precious metals (or metal in non-current coin) to the mint. But from 1364 (27 Edw III, statute 2, c 14), England had extended this export ban to include current legal tender coins, gold and silver, beyond the value of 40s, without a special royal licence. During the Anglo-Flemish commerical negotiations of 1499, Archduke Philip's ambassadors acidly reminded the English that 'theye do very moche for your subjectes to graunt

purse, I did not doubt that many people expected me to avenge this misfortune with my pen, as men of letters normally do, by writing something to arouse feeling either against the king or against England; and I feared at the same time that William Mountjoy, having brought about the situation in which I lost my money, might suspect that my feelings towards him were changing. I had to disappoint them, or rather, I had to show clearly that I was not so prejudiced as to blame my private mishap on a whole country or so thoughtless as for so small a loss to call down either on myself or on the friends I had left in England the resentment of so great a prince; at the same time I had to prove to my friend Mountjoy that my feelings of friendship towards him had not changed in the least. And so I decided to publish something forthwith. Having nothing ready at hand, I accumulated at random from a few days' reading some sort of a collection of adages, guessing that this book, such as it was, might find a welcome among those who wish to learn, at least for its utility. This I used as evidence that my friendship had not grown cold. Then I added the poem[131] I have already mentioned, to show that I bore no ill will against either the king or the country for the confiscation of my money; and this plan of mine was not unsuccessful, for such a moderate and fair-minded attitude won me many friends at the time in England, good scholars and men of high character and position. This slight work was printed a few years later by my friend Bade with a few additions and revisions by me mainly from Greek sources,[132] and later in Strasbourg by Matthias Schürer,[133] although I had meanwhile put together a more abundant supply for a Venice edition, which was published by the house of Aldus.[134] Moreover, as I saw that this work was so popular with keen students that it was clearly destined for a long life and was being published in competition by many printers, I enriched it repeatedly as either

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them to conveigh oute of the archdukis landis all money current in thoos parties ... For the archdukis subjectes may not have like pryvylage to convey money nether plate oute of your realme of England' (Georg Schanz *Englische Handelspolitik gegen Ende des Mittelalters* II [Leipzig 1881] 196). That English export ban was rigorously enforced, with licensed exemptions rarely granted or sold, until 1663 (15 Car II, c 7), when Parliament removed the prohibition against exporting gold or silver bullion and foreign coins; but the ban on exporting English coin remained in force until 'Peel's Act' of July 1819 (59 Georg III, c 49).

[131] See n34 above.

[132] Twenty adages were added to Bade's edition of 1506.

[133] 1510

[134] In the Aldine edition of 1508 (see Ep 211) the number of adages increased from 819 to 3260, the title was changed to *Adagiorum chiliades*, and the commentaries were far more extensive.

leisure or a larger supply of books became available. The latest revision was published by Johann Froben in the year of our Lord 1523.[135] Besides which, in rereading a number of authors in order to enrich my *Adagia*, I noted down many parallels on the side, more pointing the way and setting others an example of a work to come than finishing a book with the necessary care. This makes one book of *Parabolae sive similia*,[136] addressed to Pieter Gillis,[137] lawyer and citizen of Antwerp, who was once the companion of my studies.

Perhaps it will not be out of place if I subjoin to this class of work my correspondence,[138] although in all my output there is nothing I like less. In this department I have been over-responsive to the wishes of my friends, particularly as with changing circumstances they often turn into their opposites; but on this point I have already gone on record fully enough in the first letter of the latest edition,[139] which appeared from Froben's press in 1521.[140] [e]What I then conjectured, I learned afterwards from actual experience only too well. The facts themselves testify that some men who were once my sworn friends[141] – as true, I might have said, as any Pylades,[142] – have become my bitterest enemies, combining deepest ingratitude with deepest perfidy, for no other reason except that I would not lend my name to a perilous enterprise, which I always foresaw would end in disastrous discord. Yet I have never broken off a friendship with anyone because he was either more inclined towards Luther or more against Luther than I was. My disposition is naturally such that I could love even a Jew, provided he were in other respects an agreeable person to live with and friendly, and

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[135] After the Aldine edition of 1508, there were eight more authorized editions in Erasmus' lifetime, each one enlarged, all published by Froben: 1515, 1517/18, 1520, 1523, 1526, 1528, 1533, 1536. By 1536 the number of adages had grown to 4,151. Critical edition by Felix Heinlimann and Emanuel Kienzle in ASD II-5 and II-6; English edition by M.M. Phillips and R.A.B. Mynors in CWE 31–36.

[136] *Parabolae sive similia* (Strasbourg: Matthias Schürer, December 1514). Revised editions were published in June 1515 (Louvain: Dirk Martens), c December 1516 (Paris: Josse Bade), and August 1522 (Basel: Froben). The last was enlarged by the addition of sixteen *similia*. Critical edition by J.-C. Margolin in ASD I-5 1–332; translation by R.A.B. Mynors in CWE 23 123–277.

[137] Pieter Gillis (Ep 184). The dedicatory letter is Ep 312.

[138] On the editions of Erasmus' correspondence up to 1524, see CWE 1 xx–xxi, CWE 3 348–50, and Allen I 593–5.

[139] Ep 1206

[140] *Epistolae ad diversos* (Basel: Froben 31 August 1521), the first overtly authorized edition, containing 617 letters, 171 of which had not been included in earlier editions.

[141] Especially Hutten; see lines 1019–1103.

[142] The friendship between Orestes and Pylades was proverbial.

provided he did not vomit blasphemies against Christ in my hearing. And this courteous approach can, I believe, do more towards ending strife. I am, to be sure, only slightly moved when those who used to describe me in print as the sun of Germany, the prince of true theology, and the champion of sound learning now find me of less worth than seaweed; for those pompous titles, which I always disliked, I gladly hand back to them. But the ties of friendship I do not readily abandon to please anyone.[e]

I also tried my hand at the art of declamation, for which I was by nature more fitted than for those collections of materials, although some inclination urged me strongly in that direction. And so I amused myself in early days with the panegyric on marriage and the attack on it[143] which now form part of my work *De ratione conscribendi epistolas*.[144] This I did for the benefit of a distinguished young man William Mountjoy, whom I was then grounding in rhetoric. I asked him whether he liked what I had written. 'Yes,' he merrily replied; 'I like it so much that you have quite persuaded me to get married.' 'Do not make up your mind,' said I, 'till you have read the other side.' 'You can keep that,' he said; 'the first half is the one for me.' He has been married three times, and is now a widower; but perhaps will marry a fourth time – so easy is it to push the wagon on the way it already wants to go. But in very early youth, when hardly twenty, I had written in the same style the *Laus vitae monasticae*,[145] which means the life of a hermit, to please a friend who was laying traps for a nephew of his, whom he hoped to lure as a proselyte into his net.[146] Three and twenty years ago I also wrote the *Encomium artis medicae*[147] at the request of a friend who was lately physician to the emperor Charles.[148] I have found among my papers the reply of a bishop[149] to an address of welcome from his people, and cannot rightly recall the occasion on which I wrote it.[150] The address of condolence on a son's untimely death, on the other hand,[151] I wrote in Siena, when Alexander, archbishop of St Andrews,[152] son of James king of Scots, was my pupil. Long before, in England, I had set down a declamation in reply to Lucian's attack on tyrannicide,[153] being challenged to do this by Thomas More, who was then the partner of my studies and is now treasurer to the English king. *Querimonia pacis*[154] I wrote about seven years ago, when first invited to join the prince's court.[155] Great efforts were being made to bring together a conference at Cambrai of the world's most powerful princes, the emperor, the king of France, the king of England, our own Charles, and there to establish peace between them with adamantine chains, as the phrase goes.[156] The chief agents in this were that distinguished man Guillaume de Chièvres,[157] and Jean Le Sauvage,[158] lord high chancellor, a man born for the public good. The plan was opposed by certain persons who have nothing to gain from any peace, and who like Philoxenus (who said that meat was most delicious which was not meat and fish which was not fish)[159] much preferred peace that was no peace and war that was not quite war.

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[143] Written for Mountjoy (Ep 79) when Erasmus was his tutor, probably in Paris c 1497. The panegyric (without the attack) was first published as the *Encomium matrimonii* in Dirk Martens' edition of the *Querela pacis* (Louvain 1518). Critical edition by J.-C. Margolin in ASD I-5 333–416.

[144] The panegyric and the attack were included in *De conscribendis epistolis* of 1522 (see Ep 1284) as examples of *epistolae suasoriae* and *dissuasoriae*; ASD I-2 400–32 / CWE 25 129–48.

[145] The *Laus vitae monasticae*, probably written c 1486 but first published in 1521, under the title *De contemptu mundi*, by Dirk Martens at Louvain; see Ep 1194. Cf lines 1447–9 below. Critical edition by S. Dresden in ASD V-1 1–86; translation by Erika Rummel in CWE 66 129–75.

[146] See Ep 1194:13–15.

[147] The *Encomium medicinae*, written c 1499 and first published in Dirk Martens' edition of the *Declamationes aliquot* in March 1530. See Ep 799. Translation by Brian McGregor in CWE 29.

[148] Probably Ghisbert Hessels, town physician of Saint-Omer (Epp 95:13n and 673:22n), who in 1513 was listed as surgeon to Prince Charles; see Allen Ep 95:11n.

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[149] *Oratio episcopi respondentis iis qui sibi nomine populi gratulati essent et omnium nomine obedientiam quam vocant detulissent,* first published in Dirk Martens' edition of the *Querela pacis* (Louvain 1518)

[150] Allen suggests that it may have been written for James Stewart (brother of James IV of Scotland) who in 1497 became archbishop of St Andrews; Allen Ep 48:6n. R.R. Post has advanced the hypothesis that it was written for Philip of Burgundy, bishop of Utrecht (Ep 603); see *Archief voor de geschiednis van de Katholieke Kerk in Nederland* 9 (1967) 322–9.

[151] *Declamatio de morte,* written in 1509 (see following note) and published with Froben's edition of the *Querela pacis* in December 1517; see Ep 604. Translation in CWE 25 156–64.

[152] Alexander Stewart (d 1513), illegitimate son of James IV of Scotland. Stewart was Erasmus' pupil in Italy in 1509; see Epp 216 introduction and 604:4n.

[153] See n45 above.

[154] *Querela pacis* (Basel: Froben, December 1517; Louvain: Martens, March 1518). See Ep 603. Translation by Betty Radice in CWE 27 289–322.

[155] The invitation to become councillor to Prince Charles was probably extended in May 1515, though the actual appointment apparently began in January 1516; see Allen Ep 370:18n.

[156] On the circumstances in which the *Querela pacis* was written, see Ep 603 introduction and line 28n. The conference at Cambrai took place in March 1517.

[157] Ep 532:30n

[158] Ep 301:38n

[159] The authorship of this odd sentiment is a matter of controversy, but most modern scholars attribute it to Philoxenus Leucadius. See D.L. Page *Poetae Melici Graeci* (Oxford 1962) 441 (fragment 836).

And so on instructions from Jean Le Sauvage I wrote *Querela pacis*. By now things have come to such a pass that one ought to compose her epitaph, for there is no hope of her recovery.[160] Some of these trifling things 'to serious issues lead,' as Horace[161] says.

I wrote my light-hearted *Moria* while staying with Thomas More,[162] being at that time returned from Italy – a work of which I thought so little that I did not even reckon it worth publication (for I was myself in Paris[163] when it was seen through the press by Richard Croke,[164] very badly printed and full of errors), in spite of which hardly anything of mine has had a more enthusiastic reception, especially among the great.[165] A few monks only, and those the worst, together with some unusually squeamish theologians,[166] took offence at its freedom; but more were offended when Listrius added notes,[167] for before that moment it had gained from not being understood. I had at that time conceived the idea of three simultaneous declamations, in praise of Folly, Nature, and Grace; but some people I could

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[160] See Epp 1283 n3 and 1306 n22.

[161] *Ars poetica* 451

[162] On the genesis and history of the *Moriae encomium*, written in 1509, see Epp 222:1–26, 337:135–46, and *Adagia* II ii 40.

[163] The first edition was published at Paris in 1511 by Gilles de Gourmont. Seven of the thirty-five subsequent editions were augmented and revised: 1512 (Paris: Bade); 1514 (Strasbourg: Schürer); 1515, 1516, 1521, 1522, and 1532 (Basel: Froben). Critical edition by Clarence Miller in ASD IV-3; translation by Betty Radice in CWE 27 77–153.

[164] On Croke, see Ep 227:31n.

[165] These included Pope Leo X (Epp 739:12–15, 749:16–17), Guillaume Budé (Ep 583:218–20), Jakob Wimpfeling (Ep 224:45–51), Ulrich von Hutten (Ep 611:10–12), and, of course, More himself (see *St Thomas More: Selected Letters* ed Elizabeth Frances Rogers [New Haven 1961] 6–64). See also Epp 450:15–21, 494:31–5, 561:63–72, 569:186–202.

[166] Initially (1514) the Louvain theologians who made Maarten van Dorp their spokesman (Epp 304, 337); cf lines 811–17. Later theologian-critics were Edward Lee, 1518 (Ep 843:631–89), and Zúñiga, 1522, in his *Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi* (Ep 1260 n45). *Folly*, of course, remained a favourite target of monks and theologians. In 1531 Maarten Lips described it as one of the three works most hated by Erasmus' enemies, the other two being the *Epistola de esu carnium* and the *Colloquia*; Allen Ep 2566:83–4.

[167] Gerardus Listrius (Gerard Lister or Lyster), c 1492–after 1522, was rector of the school at Zwolle. With considerable help from Erasmus himself (see Allen Ep 2615:171–80), Listrius wrote a long, defensive commentary on the *Folly* which was printed with the Froben edition of 1515 and with most subsequent editions; see J. Austin Gavin and Thomas M. Walsh 'The *Praise of Folly* in Context: The Commentary of Girardus Listrius' *Renaissance Quarterly* 24 (1971) 193–209. See also Ep 641:3–6.

name proved so difficult that I changed my mind. It was as the merest youth that I began the *Antibarbari*;[168] for this too belongs, I consider, to the class of declamations. And although even among the works I have listed there are several which relate to the theory of the good life, those I shall now mention were written by me as a serious contribution to orderly and godly living. Among these is the *Panegyricus*[169] which I offered to Prince Philip[170] on his first return from Spain; for though I praised him, praise was combined with the reminder of the objects to be observed by a good prince, as I showed clearly enough in the letter to Jean Desmarez, which I then added to the work.[171] Then there was the short book *De principe christiana*,[172] which I offered to the emperor Charles (as he now is) when I had recently been summoned to join the staff of the prince's court and serve as one of his councillors.[173] So in this way I first entered on the duties of a trusty councillor. 'Right trusty' is a conventional epithet of councillors, though most princes like nothing less than those who are really trustworthy, and most councillors do nothing to live up to their description. And yet none of the great men took offence at the freedom of this book, small as it was. Good princes tolerate freedom in their advisers; it is factious licence that they cannot stand.

The *Enchiridion militis christiani*[174] I began about thirty years ago,[175] when I was lodging in the castle of Tournehem, to which I had been driven by the plague that was then raging in Paris. It started by accident. I had in the

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[168] See lines 1320–31 below.

[169] *Panegyricus ad illustrissimum Principem Philippum, Archiducem Austriae* (Antwerp: Dirk Martens, February 1504); see Ep 179 and n32 above. Critical edition by O. Herding in ASD IV-1 1–93; translation by Betty Radice in CWE 27 1–75.

[170] Philip the Handsome (1478–1506), duke of Burgundy, archduke of Austria, and king of Castile, was the son of Emperor Maximilian I and Mary of Burgundy and the father of Emperor Charles V.

[171] Ep 180

[172] *Institutio principis christiani*, probably written in the summer of 1515 and first published c March of the following year by Froben (Ep 393). Critical edition by O. Herding in ASD IV-1 95–219; translation by Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath in CWE 27 199–288.

[173] See n155.

[174] First published in the *Lucubratiunculae* (Antwerp: Dirk Martens, February 1503; repr 1509). The next edition appeared in the *Lucubrationes* published by Matthias Schürer at Strasbourg in 1515. See also n180. Text in LB V 1–66, and in *Desiderius Erasmus Roterodamus: Ausgewählte Schriften* ed H. and A. Holborn (Munich 1933; repr 1964) 1–136; translation by Charles Fantazzi in CWE 66 1–127.

[175] In 1501 (see Ep 164), which was twenty-two years earlier

castle a friend,[176] whom I shared with Batt.[177] He had a wife of a deeply religious turn of mind, while he himself was no man's enemy but his own – a spendthrift, plunged in fornication and adultery, but in other respects a pleasant companion in every way. For all theologians he had the greatest contempt, except for me. The wife was fearfully concerned for her husband's salvation, and she approached me through Batt to ask if I would write something that might get a little religion into the man; but on condition that he must not know that this was his wife's initiative, for he was cruel even to her, to the extent of beating her, as soldiers will. I did as she asked and jotted down something appropriate to the situation. This won the approval even of good scholars, particularly Jean Vitrier,[178] a Franciscan who was the great authority in those parts; and when the plague, which was raging everywhere, had again driven me from Paris, this time to Louvain,[179] I finished it at leisure. For some time my piece attracted no notice.[180] After that, it began to sell surprisingly well, thanks especially to the recommendation of certain Dominicans,[181] a number of whom have since been set against it by a preface which I added, addressed to Abbot Paul Volz,[182] a pure Christian character if ever there was one. I had attached to it[183] a letter of encouragement addressed to Adolf, lord of Veere,[184] who was then a mere boy; and besides that, two prayers to the Virgin Mother,[185] written to please the boy's mother Anna, lady of Veere,[186] in a childish style designed to suit her feelings rather than my judgment. Later I added a prayer addressed to Jesus,[187] which was more to my liking. With this was part of the extemporary disputation I held long ago with John Colet on Jesus' despair,[188] if this can be allowed to belong with the formation of character. [f]And this year, in 1524 that is, I have published my *Exomologesis*,[189] or On the principles of confessing offences to a priest.[f]

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[176] Identified as Johann Poppenruyter, a Nürnberger who established a gun foundry at Mechelen before 1510; see Ep 164 introduction.

[177] See Epp 35 introduction, 163.

[178] See Epp 163:5n.

[179] Autumn 1502; see Ep 171 introduction.

[180] Cf n174. Only after 1515 was the *Enchiridion* frequently reprinted and translated into nearly every European language; see *Bibliotheca Belgica: Bibliographie générale des Pays Bas* ed F. Vander Haeghen et al (Ghent: The Hague 1880–) nos E1000ff.

[181] Unidentified

[182] Ep 858, added to Froben's first edition (July 1518). The letter contains some harsh criticisms of contemporary monasticism.

[183] Ie, to the *Lucubratiunculae* of 1503. See n174.

[184] Ep 93

[185] *Paean Virgini matri dicendus* LB V 1227–34 and *Obsecratio sive oratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus adversis* ibidem 1233–40

[186] Ep 145 introduction

[187] *Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum* LB V 1210–16

I also attempted greater things: I made an explanation by way of paraphrase of Paul's Epistle to the Romans.[190] After this, encouraged to go progressively further by the success of my rash attempt and the urging of my friends,[191] I completed paraphrases on all the apostolic Epistles.[192] This work not being a continuous effort but finished at intervals, in such a way that as each section was completed I determined to refrain from more of the kind, the result was that, contrary to my usual practice, the whole was not dedicated to any individual. Later, encouraged by Matthäus, the cardinal of Sion,[193] I attempted the same thing, not long ago, for Matthew. This piece of work I dedicated to the emperor Charles,[194] who was, I know, much pleased with the result of my efforts.[195] [g]I had already ceased to think about making paraphrases when, being unexpectedly recalled to this field by many friends,[196] I completed the paraphrase on John;[197] for John more than anyone makes many difficulties which hold up the reader. Nor was I allowed to stop there: there began to be a demand for Luke,[198] for there are many things in

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[188] *Disputatiuncula de tedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu, instante crucis hora, deque verbis visus est mortem deprecari: 'Pater, si fieri potest, transeat a me calix iste.'* See Epp 108–11. At the time of the publication of the *Lucubratiunculae* of 1503, Colet's replies to Erasmus' arguments were not available. These turned up later and were published in the Froben edition of 1518; see Ep 110 introduction.

[189] *Exomologesis sive modus confitendi* (Basel: Froben 1524). See Allen Ep 1426. Several smaller works were printed with this work; see Epp 1310, 1324, 1329, 1347, 1427–8.

[190] Louvain: Dirk Martens, [November] 1517. See Ep 710.

[191] See Epp 755:4–7, 962.

[192] Published in the period c January 1519–January 1521, in most cases by Martens at Louvain, though copies of these first editions, where they exist at all, are extremely rare. Froben's subsequent editions were printed in larger numbers and many more copies have survived. See Epp 916 (Corinthians), 956 (Galatians), 1062 (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Thessalonians), 1043 (Timothy, Titus, Philemon), 1181 (Hebrews), 1171 (James), 1112 (Peter and Jude), and 1179 (John).

[193] Matthäus Schiner; Ep 1295 introduction

[194] Ep 1255

[195] Epp 1270, 1342:273–81

[196] Cf Ep 1333 n3.

[197] Dedicated to Archduke Ferdinand; Ep 1333

[198] Basel: Froben 30 August 1523

him which he shares with no other evangelist – so easy was it to find some excuse for asking. This work was dedicated to the English king, Henry viii.[199] The addition of Mark[200] was then suggested to me by an eminent friend,[201] that a gap in the middle of the work might not tempt someone to interrupt its uniformity by adding something of his own. This was dedicated to Francis i, king of France.[202] There remained the Acts of the Apostles,[203] part of St Luke's Gospel, and those I dedicated to Pope Clement vii.[204] The Apocalypse on no account admits of paraphrase. And so at this point my paraphrases reached a fairly successful conclusion;[g] nor has any other work of mine earned me less unpopularity than they have. I have also written a commentary on two psalms,[205] being invited to undertake this by urgent demands from certain quarters.[206] [h]Here, however, I am deterred not only by the size and difficulty of the work but by the multitude of commentators, such that there is a risk of their burying the message rather than explaining it. The third psalm at any rate I expounded in paraphrase,[207] to please a learned friend, Melchior Vianden.[208] I also wrote a paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer,[209] at the request of Jost or Justus Weissenburg,[210] secretary of the king of Poland. I have lately finished the *Concio de misericordia Domini*,[211] for which I was asked by that saintly prelate Christopher, bishop of Basel, who had dedicated a chapel under that name;[212] and at the same time the *Comparatio virginitatis martyrii*,[213] asked for by a man of high character, Helias, warden of the College of Maccabeites in Cologne.[214] The *Concio de puero Iesu*[215] I had written long before at the request of John Colet.[h] [216] My *Methodus verae theologiae*, which had already gone through several editions,[217] I revised and enlarged in the year 1522,[218] [i]and again in the following year.[i] [219]

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[199] Ep 1381

[200] Basel: Froben, December 1523

[201] Unidentified

[202] Ep 1400

[203] Basel: Froben, February 1524

[204] Ep 1414

[205] The *Enarratio allegorica in primum psalmum* appeared in the *Lucubrationes* of 1515; Ep 327. A commentary on Psalm 2, with a preface in Froben's name, was appended to Erasmus' edition of Arnobius (Ep 1304), September 1522; see Allen v 100.

[206] Henry viii; see Allen Ep 2315:171–2.

[207] *Paraphrasis in tertium psalmum*, first printed with the *Exomologesis* (n189); see Ep 1427.

[208] Ep 1257 n1

[209] *Precatio dominica in septem portiones distributa* (Basel: Froben [1523]); Ep 1393.

[210] Justus Ludovicus Decius (Jost Ludwig Dietz) of Weissenburg (Wissembourg) in Lower Alsace (c 1485–1545). C 1508 Decius, who had already acquired a thorough knowledge of commerce, finance, and mining in Moravia, Tyrol, and Hungary, settled in Cracow, where he joined the banking house of Jan Boner, an associate of the Fuggers. In May 1520 Decius became secretary to Sigismund i, king of Poland, whom he served as economic adviser and skilful diplomat. In 1522, on one of his diplomatic journeys, Decius, who was also a bibliophile, an editor, and a patron of humanist scholars, visited Erasmus in Basel. In 1523 he arranged the reprinting of the *De conscribendis epistolis* in Cracow. Thereafter he corresponded with Erasmus and served as intermediary between Erasmus and other Polish admirers. Decius' own publications include a number of economic treatises and writings on Polish history.

For my part, I had formed the habit of boasting that, although I had written so much, both light-hearted and serious, I had never yet attacked any mortal man in print by name; but some evil genius grudged me this enviable reputation. Not but what I have maintained my record of not writing to hurt to the extent of never drawing sword against anyone except under insufferable provocation; nor have I ever answered anyone without overcoming by forbearance an adversary who had the advantage of me in scurrility. This is, I think, so clear from my publications that I have the right to claim this much credit without being criticized for boasting. At first it was my whole ambition to be attacked by no one and attack no one myself, and so ply my pen with a light heart without ever drawing blood. But in this I was doubly disappointed: first because I was indeed attacked by many people most unpleasantly in published books, and even by those to whom I

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[211] *De immensa Dei misericordia concio* (Basel: Froben, September 1524); Epp 1456, 1464, 1474

[212] The bishop Christoph von Utenheim (Ep 1332). For other references to the chapel, concerning which no information could be found, see Allen Epp 1456:9, 1474:1–2.

[213] *Virginis et martyris comparatio*, first published in 1523 and then again, in enlarged form, in 1524; see Epp 1346, 1475.

[214] Helias Marcaeus, warden of a convent of Benedictine nuns at Cologne that took its name from relics of the Maccabees possessed by the house; see Epp 842, 1475.

[215] *Concio de puero Iesu a puero in schola Coletica nuper Londini instituta pronuncianda* (1511); Ep 175 introduction. Translation by Emily Kearns in CWE 29.

[216] On Colet and his school, see n39 above.

[217] A short *Methodus* was included among the introductory material in the *Novum instrumentum* of 1516. In the second edition, the *Novum Testamentum* of 1519, the *Methodus*, greatly amplified, appeared under the title *Ratio verae theologiae*. It was removed from subsequent editions of the New Testament since in November 1518 its long career as a separate work had already begun. See the introductions to Ep 745 and Allen Ep 1365. Cf lines 1579–80 of this letter.

[218] Froben's edition of June 1522

[219] The edition of 1523 had a new preface, Ep 1365. All earlier editions had had Ep 745 as preface.

had never given any cause; and secondly, because they were men whom I could win no credit by defeating, while there was no honour – no profit, even – in being matched against such creatures. Whenever therefore I am driven to it, I remain laconic, I glance at the question in the fewest possible words. Nor have I ever dedicated any such piece of mine to any fellow creature: sometimes I neither expected nor wished them to survive, sometimes I was unwilling to burden anyone with unpopularity, for I have tried hard all my life to see that no trouble recoils from me onto my friends. Maarten van Dorp, at the instigation of certain people I could name,[220] opened the very first of these minor attacks on me;[221] and I replied to him as one friend to another, defending my *Moria* and the New Testament together in a single letter.[222] Nor did this cavalry skirmish cause any rift in our friendship, for I knew that he did not stoop to this from any dislike of me, but was young in those days and impressionable and was pushed into it by others. He was followed by Jacques Lefèvre d'Etaples,[223] an honest man, a good scholar, and an old friend of mine. In reply to him I took the line that I preferred to suppose this a necessity, for which fate and not the individual was responsible; and this incident, serious as it was, did not lead me to renounce my friendship with him – even today the mutual good will between us subsists unimpaired. Over this I lost twelve days' work. And not long after, up jumped Edward Lee, a friend turned suddenly into an enemy, whose attack on me showed by its form that he was not interested in taking prisoners but wished to see Erasmus annihilated;[224] and him I answered in

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[220] Possibly Jan Briart (Epp 670 and 1299 n12) and Jacobus Latomus (Ep 934:4n)

[221] Ep 304

[222] Ep 337

[223] See Ep 315 introduction. In his second edition of the Pauline Epistles (colophon date 1515, but see Ep 597:44n), Lefèvre criticized Erasmus' interpretation of Heb 2:7 (LB IX 68–80) in terms that Erasmus considered a charge of blasphemy. Erasmus replied with his *Apologia ad Jacobum Fabrum Stapulensem* (Louvain: Dirk Martens, August 1517 / LB IX 17–66). Cf Ep 597:37n.

[224] On Lee, see Ep 765. His attacks upon Erasmus' annotations to the New Testament provoked an acrimonious controversy which lasted somewhat over two years (1518–20). More than seventy of Erasmus' letters in that period reflect his preoccupation with Lee's criticisms, which culminated in the printing at Paris (by Gilles de Gourmont for Konrad Resch) of the *Annotationes in Annotationes Novi Testamenti Desiderii Erasmi*, February 1520. Ep 1037 was Lee's preface; Ep 1061 and a letter addressed to the students at Louvain were also included. The controversy can be followed in detail in CWE 6 and 7, and a full account of it is found in A. Bludau *Die beiden ersten Erasmus Ausgaben des Neuen Testaments und ihre Gegner* (Freiburg 1902) 86–125.

three pamphlets,[225] though in the second edition[226] I left out the first of these because it merely answered his poisonous, quarrelsome tirades, worthy of any fishwife, from which the reader could derive neither profit nor pleasure. On this, with the writing and the printing (for I corrected every page myself), I wasted fifty days, as I have witnesses to prove. Then out crawled Jacobus Latomus,[227] who was at the time a candidate for the highest honours in theology,[228] which I know not how have for some years now been awarded to hardly anyone in Louvain unless he has first published a sample of his powers of malignant invention. To his book,[229] since in its twists and turns it reflected its author's mind, I issued a more than laconic reply,[230] refraining for the time being even from any expression of feeling, for in those days I hoped that he would sometime adopt more straightforward behaviour. This meant a loss of three days, not counting the time taken to read his pamphlets while I was travelling by carriage. They had also pressed Atensis[231] to their cause; he was at that time vice-chancellor[232] of the university there, an honourable man and in theology the best person they had, a not uncivilized person and a fairly good friend of mine, but irascible by nature. And there were experts there who, although capable of driving the mildest nature into a frenzy, urged him at least on to his death; for his age and state of health were not equal to the burden of such sorry business. They had put him up, as I say, in a public lecture-room, on a solemn university occasion,[233] to reflect on me with the most extraordinary innuendo and indirect attacks, actually labelling me a heretic because (so he

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[225] The first, *Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis E. Lei* (Antwerp: M. Hillen c March 1520 / Ferguson *Opuscula* 236–303) took particular aim at Lee's version of events in his prefatory epistles (see previous note). This was followed by two long *Responsiones ad annotationes Ed. Lei* (Antwerp: M. Hillen, April and May 1520 / LB IX 123–284) in which Erasmus defended his edition of the New Testament.

[226] Ie, in the edition of Lee's *Annotationes*, together with Erasmus' two *Responsiones*, published by Froben in May 1520 at Erasmus' instigation. Ep 1100 was Erasmus' preface.

[227] Ep 934:4n. In 1519 Erasmus and Latomus quarrelled over the latter's opposition to the teaching of Greek and Hebrew; see Ep 934 introduction.

[228] Latomus received a doctorate in theology at Louvain in August 1519.

[229] *De trium linguarum et studii theologici ratione* (Antwerp: M. Hillen 1519)

[230] *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* (Antwerp: J. Thibault, n d and Basel: Froben, May 1519)

[231] Jan Briart of Ath (Epp 670, 1299 n12)

[232] See Ep 643:9n.

[233] The circumstances are described in Ep 946 introduction.

said) I had spoken too highly of the estate of matrimony.[234] On this point he had already given me satisfaction, first by sending Maarten van Dorp and Gillis van Delft to talk to me on the subject,[235] and then in friendly conversation with himself. Later on therefore, when I published a reply,[236] it was addressed not to Atensis but to the suspicions of men in general, and more in his interest than my own. And because there was a plot behind all this, one disturbance succeeded another;[237] for they thought that if they could thus drive me out of the university, all the ancient languages and the humanities would be off too and never be heard of again. About the same time a clamour was raised against me by monks at London in England,[238] at Paris in France,[239] and at Brussels in Brabant,[240] and raised in sermons before crowded audiences, because I had put *In principio erat sermo* in my version instead of *In principio erat verbum*. This disturbance too I suppressed with a pamphlet,[241] making it clear that the authors of the uproar were simply insane, though that was clear enough to educated people even before I uttered a word. The very first person to attack my version of the New Testament had been an obscure man[242] whom I thought sufficiently answered in a letter which did not mention his name.[243]

And now it seemed that we should hear no more of this trouble, when

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[234] In the *Encomium matrimonii*; see lines 652–61 above.

[235] See Ep 946 introduction.

[236] *Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii* (Basel: Froben 1519 / LB IX 105–12)

[237] Briart's disciples renewed the attack in the aftermath of Erasmus' dispute with Latomus; see Ep 946.

[238] The Franciscan Henry Standish (Ep 608:15n), bishop of St Asaph, who denounced Erasmus in a sermon in St Paul's churchyard; see LB IX 111E–112B and Ep 1126:21–98.

[239] The identity of the Paris assailant is unknown; see LB IX 112D.

[240] Erasmus' antagonist in Brussels was a young Carmelite and bachelor of theology egged on by his mentor to attack Erasmus in a sermon; LB IX 112C–D. The mentor was presumably Baechem (lines 928ff). The bachelor may have been Jan Robyns (Ep 946:4n).

[241] *Apologia palam refellens quorundam seditiosos clamores apud populum ac magnates, quibus ut impie factum iactitant, quod in Evangelio Ioannis verterit, 'In principio erat sermo'* (Louvain: Dirk Martens, February 1520), with Ep 1072 as preface. An enlarged version, minus Ep 1072, was published by Froben in May 1520, along with the *Responsiones* to Lee (line 826 above) and the *Epistolae eruditorum virorum* (Ep 1083 introduction). LB IX 111–22 reprints the enlarged edition.

[242] Perhaps Hieronymus Dungersheim, the Leipzig theologian whose criticisms of Erasmus' *Novum Testamentum* are found in Ep 554.

[243] No answer in letter form survives. However, in the *Annotationes* Erasmus does reply to Dungersheim's arguments without naming the 'friend, versed in letters, who argues in his letter'; see LB VI 868C.

lo and behold in Spain, all of a sudden, up jumps Diego López Zúñiga[244] – what sort of a man is clear from what he writes: boastful, shameless, stupid, a great admirer of his own perfections, and a bitter controversialist, born, one might think, for just such sorry business. Rumour of something frightful had preceded, and the book[245] itself was full of extraordinary delusions. I answered him briefly,[246] and never so much disliked answering anyone. He proceeded to Rome to enjoy the triumphs of his exquisite performance, and again put out an attack one me, which he entitled *Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi*[247] – the maddest thing that ever appeared. As a result, the order of cardinals had forbidden its printing; and when none the less it was printed secretly by certain monks, who regard the pope's authority as sacrosanct when it happens to suit them, they again forbade the sale.[248] Scarcely had I answered him,[249] briefly and with the contempt that he deserved, when another pamphlet took the air, a forerunner of those three in which, like a leading actor, he left no doubt of his prowess in scurrility.[250] So I answered that one too,[251] by the oil of the same lamp, as the saying goes.[252] A brother stood at his right hand, one Sancho Carranza,[253] a theologian of Alcalá, to defend Zúñiga at least in the three passages which he had chosen and, in the process of trying to make me out a heretic, to advertise his own effrontery as a traducer. His pamphlet too I answered. And Rome finds readers for such trash as this! Some people must read it, for some buy it, though there is hardly anywhere there where you can find on sale the works of the Fathers, which make for true religion. [j]In fact, plenty of people believe it right for the standing of the church to be defended by such support as this; and though the chief point in their programme is that the constitutions of the Roman pontiff should carry weight everywhere, he shows in fact what respect they deserve from other nations by so often making game of the edicts of popes and cardinals in Rome itself with

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[244] Ep 1260 n36

[245] The *Annotationes contra Erasmum Roterodamum* of 1520; see Ep 1260 n36.

[246] The *Apologia* of September 1521; see Ep 1277 n1.

[247] See Ep 1260 n45.

[248] See Ep 1302 n26. Cf lines 914–16.

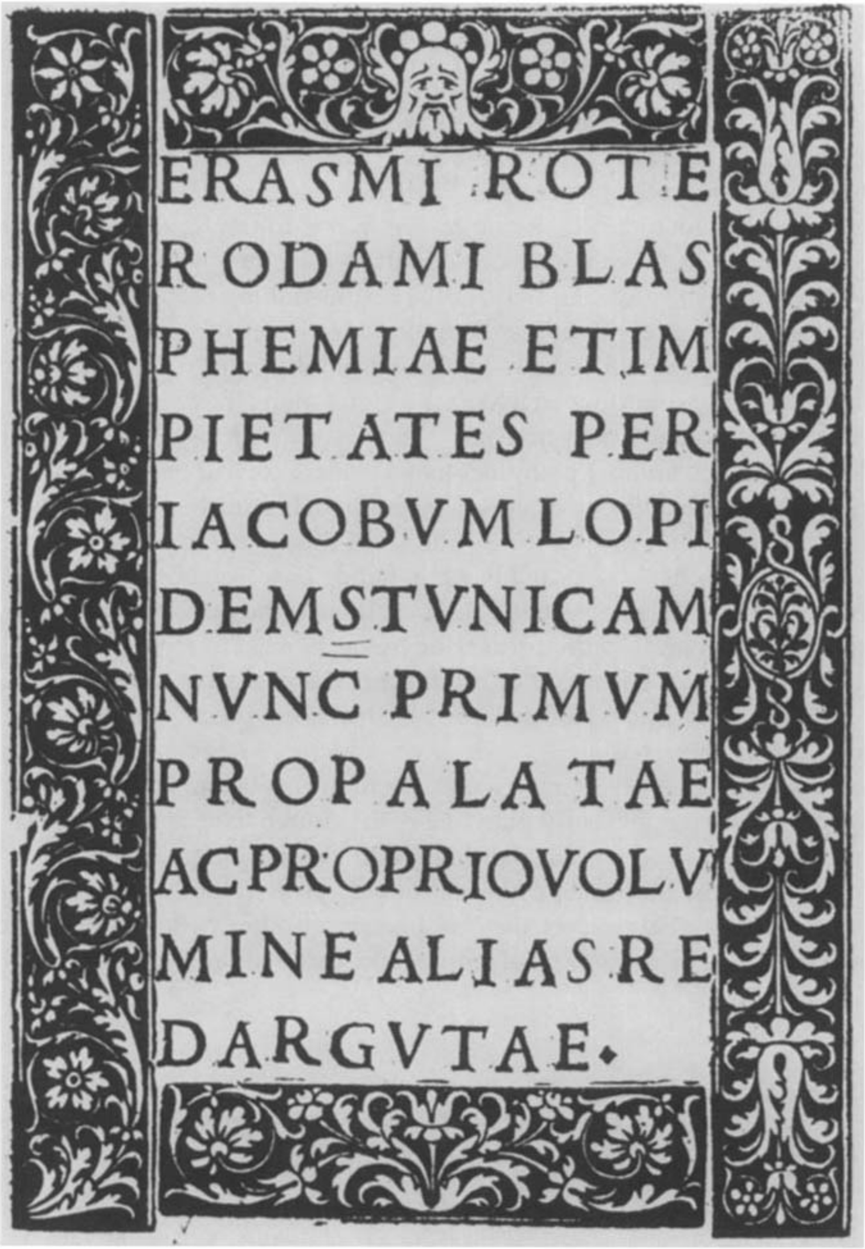
[249] With the *Apologia adversus libellum Stunicae* of August 1522; see Ep 1260 n45.

[250] The *Libellus triorum illorum voluminum praecursor* of 1522; see Ep 1312 n4 and lines 901–2 of this letter.

[251] In the *Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae*; see Ep 1312 n5.

[252] An allusion, perhaps, to the adage 'oleum et operam perdere' (I iv 62), to spend one's time fruitlessly.

[253] On Carranza, his pamphlet, and Erasmus' reply, see Ep 1277 n8.



ERASMI ROTE
RODAMI BLAS
PHEMIAE ET IM
PIETATES PER
IACOBVM LOPI
DEM STVNICAM
NVNC PRIMVM
PROPALATAE
AC PROPRIO VOLV
MINE ALIAS RE
DARGVTAE.

Diego López Zúñiga *Erasmi Roterodami blasphemiae et impietates*
title-page
Rome: A. Bladus 1522
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies,
Victoria University, University of Toronto

impunity.[254] They tell you in reply that Zúñiga is tolerated in Rome as Pasquil is.[255] Pasquil is not so mad as that, and he performs only once a year. This man neglects everything else and makes this his sole business; and this he thinks a piece of rare good fortune.[j] Of Carranza I hear nothing, but Zúñiga is hard at work even now. He ranges up and down, collecting support, and is pressing the pope for leave to publish those three famous pamphlets[256] with official approval. Personally I am astonished at some men's abandoned impudence: they take it upon themselves to attack with great virulence those who are working for the benefit of others, they are so often detected in barefaced errors, and yet, as though they had won the day, they take the field again and deliberately challenge their opponents. They offer no excuses in the mean time; they continue to throw mud at other people. I myself at least, if anything of the sort had happened to me, should hide my head in solitude, and be ashamed to take the stage again before a learned audience. The man who errs while trying to be helpful secures our forgiveness; but who can pardon those who make the most disgraceful errors in the course of an attack on a fellow creature? [k]Zúñiga had published the first fruits of his malevolence at Alcalá;[257] but when such a book found few buyers, he carried off his wares to Rome like any bagman. When Pope Leo refused him leave to publish the rest of his trumped-up accusations,[258] he put out some things after the pope's death during the interregnum,[259] as I said, and would have published more, had not an edict of the cardinals[260] restricted him more than once; for Adrian hung about for several months in Spain before proceeding to Rome. Then, after a vain attempt to get leave,

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[254] See lines 914–26.

[255] Pasquin or Pasquil (*Pasquino* or *Pasquillo* in Italian) was the name popularly given to a mutilated piece of ancient statuary unearthed in Rome in 1501 and set up near the Piazza Navona. It soon became the annual custom on St Mark's Day (25 April) to post on the statue anonymous satirical Latin verses, whether political, ecclesiastical, or personal. In the course of the sixteenth century it became common all over Europe for anonymous Pasquins to write satires and lampoons called pasquinades.

[256] See n250 above.

[257] Ie, the *Annotationes contra Erasmum*; see n245 above.

[258] Ep 1213:37–41, Allen Epp 1581:191–6, 2385:69–72, and *Apologia ad Blasphemias Stunicae* LB IX 357B.

[259] There was a lapse of nine months between the death of Leo X (1 December 1521) and the arrival of Adrian VI in Rome (28 August 1522) from Spain. Zúñiga's *Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi* (line 876) and his *Libellus praecursor* (lines 881–2) were published at Rome in this period.

[260] See line 877.

from Adrian this time,[261] to publish what he had written, as soon as the pope was dead[262] he returned to his tricks and, while the cardinals were incarcerated and fighting over the choice of a new pope, he issued a number of conclusions which he had extracted from the whole range of my work,[263] and was meanwhile getting ready to bring the rest before the public. And so he would have done, had not the authority of Clement VII suppressed the man,[264] who by this time was clearly raving mad. To this book likewise I wrote a brief reply,[265] although I had already answered before.[k]

There is in Louvain in the theological faculty a certain Carmelite[266] who has a habit of boasting that he uses his tongue rather than his pen; and a tongue he most certainly has, though it is only fit for the purpose suggested by Catullus.[267] This man's pastime, over his wine, in the theology lecture-room and even in public sermons, is to call me a heretic; and he makes such good progress that all sane men now despair of his sanity. His example is followed by several others,[268] who think it is quite enough to give them the air of eminent divines if they call anyone they please a heretic, a schismatic, or a forger, as though any bargee could not do the same. This man publicly, in his ordinary lectures, accused me of two trifling misdemeanours, heresy and falsification of the Scriptures, because in the First Epistle to the Corinthians I translated only what I found in the Greek: 'We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.' This scurrilous attack with all its impudence I rejected in a pamphlet,[269] but with no personal abuse and even suppressing the man's name; and even so he is indignant. Very well: if he himself thinks it fair that someone should be indignant with him for wiping off mud thrown by anyone on his own clean white habit (the only clean thing about him), I will agree that it is fair for him to be indignant with me for rejecting such scurrilous impudence, even leaving his name out of it

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[261] See Ep 1331:40–3, Allen Ep 1415:13–17, and *Apologia ad Stunicae Conclusiones* LB IX 385A.

[262] 14 September 1523

[263] *Conclusiones principaliter suspectae et scandalosae quae reperiuntur in libris Erasmi Roterodami* (Rome 1523)

[264] Allen Epp 1432:35–9, 1433:13–15, 1438:14–16

[265] *Apologia ad Stunicae Conclusiones*, the prefatory letter for which (Ep 1428) is dated 1 March 1524. It was published with the *Exomologesis* (Basel: Froben 1524).

[266] Baechem (Ep 1254 n6)

[267] Ie, to lick the arse and the sandals of a peasant; Catullus 98.3–4

[268] See Ep 1330:53–6.

[269] *Apologia de loco taxato qui est in epistola Pauli ad Corinthios ... 'Omnes quidem resurgemus'* ... (Basel: Froben 1522). Text in LB IX 433–42

for the moment. And though his behaviour has earned him the disapproval of all decent people, the one man whose support he can rely on is himself. He declaims against scandalous pamphlets. No pamphlet is scandalous which defends an innocent man against the inventions of a raving lunatic; it is a scurrilous tongue that uses barefaced lies to bring such an atrocious charge against a man who deserves none of it – who in fact deserves gratitude. The same man lately had detected four heresies in my *Colloquia*,[270] and on this score was triumphant everywhere; over the wine, in sermons and conversation and lectures all his talk was of heresies. ⌈To this slander also I replied briefly.[271] This man's outrageous utterances had been silenced by Pope Adrian, who issued a diploma in which he gave strict instructions that no one should vilify Erasmus.[272] He kept silence for a time, however reluctantly. Soon after the pope's death[273] he returned to his old uproarious behaviour, just as though orders rightly issued by the pope ought not to be permanently binding. So he resumed his true self, and made amends for his former silence by the energy of his vituperation. He was lecturing on St Matthew's Gospel, and not seldom aimed a stone of some sort at me from his rostrum in the school of theology, so brazenly that no hired buffoon could be worse and so comically that a good part of those who attended his lectures came solely for the entertainment; some think he plays the fool deliberately in order to attract an audience. I had put out a defence of that passage in Corinthians 'We shall all arise but we shall not all be changed.'[274] In this I had disposed of his false accusations with arguments so solid that, as they say, you could get your fingers round them; and yet, exactly as though I had not said a word, he was not ashamed to speak like this in public. 'In this,' said he, 'Erasmus has many supporters, but I will not conceal the truth. If something is held by the church, whatever contradicts that is false and heretical; what the church holds is in contradiction to Erasmus' reading; therefore Erasmus' reading is false and heretical.' In the third chapter of Matthew, for the old reading *Poenitentiam agite*, 'Repent ye,' my version had *Resipiscite*. 'Here,' says our friend, 'Erasmus denies penitence,' as though *poenitentiam agere* in Latin meant the same as to do penance enjoined on you for your faults; or as though the word *poenitentia* came from *poena*, punishment and not rather from *pone tenere*, grasping something from behind, understanding it (that is) in retrospect, as Greek uses *metanoia*; or as though penance in the sense of making amends was done away with if the word used to command a sinner is *resipiscere*. In chapter 6, his theology positively blossomed. He declared that nothing could have been more absurd than my introducing *remitte* and *remittimus* for forgiveness in place of *dimitte* and *dimittimus*. *Remittere*, he said, means to send something back to someone; and does anyone pray nowadays that God should send back to him the sins that have been abolished by confession? It astonishes me that he should not equally make fun of the Creed and even of the Gospels themselves, for speaking so often of the 'remission' of sins; why does he not insist that they should put 'dimission'? Why does he not turn his wit against the seventh chapter of Luke, where *remitto* is used twice, in 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven her, for she loved much,' and then in 'Thy sins are forgiven thee'? This Coroebus[275] of ours has failed to detect that the nonsense he talked in vilifying my version applies equally to the standard text of the church. In the second chapter of Matthew, for 'all Jerusalem' I had put 'the whole city of Jerusalem,' not rejecting the familiar version but expressing more exactly the translator's intention. On this he demonstrated, starting from the substitutions in scholastic logic, that the same sense could not be conveyed both by my words and by those of the translator, because my words do not admit of the substitution of the general for the particular or of the particular for the general. This sort of rubbish is unloaded every day by a man advanced in years who is the leading spirit of the Louvain theologians; and then they wonder that the pope's policy makes so little progress, when such are the men and methods used to carry it out! Men worthy indeed to be supported by the world of idleness! A theologian of great authority, who well deserves that intelligent citizens should entrust their children to him! For[276] he has taken upon himself the additional office of protecting the multitudes from the humanities.[1] He has here a boon

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[270] See Epp 1299–1302.

[271] In Ep 1301, which was printed with the first edition of the *Catalogus lucubrationum*

[272] See Allen Epp 1481:62–4, 1359:2–3.

[273] See n262 above.

[274] See n269 above.

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[275] See *Adagia* II ix 64: *Stultior Coroebo* (Sillier than Coroebus). Coroebus tried to number the waves of the sea although he could only count to five.

[276] At this point, Allen, in his attempt to harmonize the texts of 1523 and 1524, committed a pair of blunders which the editors of LB had managed to avoid. First, he mistakenly repeated the sentence with which the inserted passage 'I' begins: 'Et huic calumniae paucis respondimus.' Second, he relegated to a footnote the sentence which is the real conclusion to insert 'I': 'Nam hanc quoque prouinciam suscipit, quo plures arceat a bonis literis.' We have eliminated the unwarranted repetition and put the banished sentence back in its rightful place.

companion, another man who has spent sleepless nights composing an attack on me,[277] which he means to publish, if he could find a vicar-general of his order as mad as he is.[278] Nothing has done more to make Luther acceptable to the world than the characters of such men as this.

I added moreover two or three defensive pieces to the New Testament when it was about to appear, foreseeing that there would be no shortage of malicious attacks on it.[279] There are also letters mixed in with the others or printed separately, which could be regarded as defences, for instance those addressed to Marcus Laurinus and Jacob of Hoogstraten.[280] But it is a relief to pass on from this record of controversy. [m]And it seemed already that controversy was over, had not Ulrich von Hutten arisen, suddenly and quite unexpectedly, a friend turned all at once into an enemy;[281] such is the power of malignant gossip over men who have no ballast.[282] No one ever attacked me with more hostility than he;[283] and yet I intended not to answer, had not influential friends judged that my reputation was at stake. And so I published my *Spongia*,[284] the title of which already promised that I would

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[277] Vincentius Theoderici (Ep 1196) was the driving spirit behind an *apologia* attacking Erasmus' *Exomologesis* (Ep 1426) and the *Epistola de esu carnium* (Ep 1274 n7); Allen Ep 1571:65n. Owing to the reluctance of Theoderici's vicar-general (lines 1011–12, Allen Epp 1582:1–2, 1603:37–40), the work was not published until March 1525.

[278] This sentence appears only in the first edition, 1523.

[279] In the first edition of 1516, Erasmus included an *apologia* beginning with the words 'Iam ut paucis occurram Apologia' (LB VI **2r–**3r). To the second edition of 1519 he added an additional apology entitled *Capita argumentorum contra morosos quosdam ac indoctos* (ibidem **3v–***4r).

[280] Epp 1342 (Laurinus) and 1006 (Hoogstraten)

[281] See Ep 1331 n24.

[282] See n297 below.

[283] In the *Expostulatio cum Erasmo Roterodamo*, published during the summer at Strasbourg by Johann Schott; the text is in Böcking II 180–248, and an annotated English translation by Randolph J. Klawiter is in *The Polemics of Erasmus of Rotterdam and Ulrich von Hutten* (Notre Dame 1977) 59–138. Hutten wrote the *Expostulatio* in Mulhouse (Mülhausen) in the spring of 1523, after seeing Ep 1342 (published with the *Catalogus lucubrationum* in April), in which Erasmus repudiated all connection with Lutheranism.

[284] *Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni* (Basel: Froben, September 1523). Text in Böcking II 262–324; critical edition by C. Augustijn in ASD IX-1 91–210; annotated English translation in Klawiter *Polemics* (n283 above) 139–303. Ep 1378 was the preface to the first edition, which was still at press when Hutten died in Zürich c 31 August. This circumstance, as Erasmus realized, robbed the *Spongia* of much of its welcome and caused him, first, to insert Ep 1389 as preface to the second edition (c October 1523) and, second, to insert this

write with moderation, though some people think I did nothing of the kind; while I can say with a clear conscience that I strove really hard to reflect on no one in passing while defending myself, and did my best to spare Hutten himself so far as the subject permitted. Those who wish Hutten's reputation to be universally watertight should reserve their indignation for the men whose falsehoods drove him into this position, and still more for those (but really they are the same people) who use all their endeavours to make me take pen in hand against a man even when he is dead. This however they shall never force me to; to be raving mad is not to my taste, and I perceive that this business has now issued in mere madness. And so I have no mind henceforward to take issue with prizefighting pamphlets of this kind.[285] My first effort shall be to keep my conscience clear in the sight of Christ, and I trust that the reasons behind my policy will be endorsed by all men of good will. As for those noisy ruffians who seem quite unaware of the difference between writing and raving, I for my part would rather do them a mischief in deeds than in words, if a Christian could wish to hurt anyone at all. Those who represent my *Spongia* as vindictive and insolent will please remember one thing: the special affection I had for Hutten's gifts, the generosity with which I recommended him to the public in so many of my publications when he was not yet well known, and all the letters in which I praised him to my friends,[286] and specially to the cardinal of Mainz.[287] In one particular letter[288] I compare him with Thomas More, the most upright, fair-minded, friendly, intelligent man on whom the sun has shone for many generations. How emphatically unlike him Hutten has shown himself, and falsified my praise of him! In my work on the New Testament, which is now in its third

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apologetic passage into the 1524 edition of the *Catalogus*. In Allen Ep 1347:69–71, Erasmus names Froben and Beatus Rhenanus as the friends who instigated the publication of the *Spongia*.

[285] Hutten's principal defender was Otto Brunfels (Allen Ep 1405 introduction), whose *Pro Vlricho Hutteno defuncto ad Erasmi Roterodami Spongiam responsio* was published by Johann Schott in Strasbourg early in 1524 (text in Böcking II 325–51). Some time later, possibly in the summer of 1524 (Allen Ep 1466:26–7) the *Judicium de Spongia Erasmi Roterodami* of Erasmus Alber (Allen Ep 1466:26n) was printed by Johann Setzer in Haguenau (text in Böcking II 373–8); see WA-Br III 158–9. For a time, Erasmus suspected that Hermannus Buschius (Ep 1291 n4) was the real author; Allen Epp 1466:26–8, 1523:102–4.

[286] Epp 745:18–21, 778:53–5, 874:6, 967:115–21, 968:24–6, 1009:78–83, 1114:13–16, 1115:47–9

[287] Albert of Brandenburg (Ep 661), to whom Epp 745, 968, and 1009 (see preceding note) had been addressed

[288] Ep 999, written at Hutten's request, the earliest biography of More. See especially lines 5–11.

edition,[289] I sing his praises with no ordinary warmth.[290] Will they please remember something else: I never gave him any cause to withdraw from our friendship (and friendship ought not to be severed without very grave cause), and furthermore it was he who not only breached the laws of friendship but delivered the most bitter attacks out of a kind of ambush on the reputation and life of his friend. The facts absolutely speak for themselves: Hutten had no other purpose in writing against me as he did except to assassinate with his pen one whom his sword could not reach. Regarding himself as a man of valour, 'He is a poor old man,' he thought, 'he is an invalid, he is frightened and feeble; he will not be long for this world when he reads such a savage attack.' That those were his thoughts was shown by the vaunting words he used.

I will now appeal to the honest opinion of those who knew Hutten at close quarters, though even men who were unacquainted with him are aware that he always lived a soldier's life, to use no harsher term; and yet all through my *Spongia* I never cast in his teeth that lascivious living which not even his pitiful disease could teach him to abandon, nor the gaming and the wenching, the bankruptcy brought on by his extravagance, the massive debts, the disappointed creditors. And then the outrages he planned – the extortion of money from the Carthusians,[291] the mutilation of several monks,[292] the assaults on the public highway on three abbots[293] (a crime for which one of his servants was seized and beheaded by the count palatine[294]) – these, I say, and very many others of the sort are public knowledge everywhere; but I revive none of these old sores in the *Spongia*, nor do I answer an enemy's fire by charging him with true and notorious crimes though he has brazenly poured such a cesspit of utterly false accusations on

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[289] 1522

[290] In a note on Thess 1:2, also found in the editions of 1516 and 1519. The passage pertaining to Hutten is printed in Böcking I 103–4.

[291] As part of his private 'war upon the Romanists,' Hutten in the autumn of 1522 declared a feud against the Carthusians of Strasbourg, who purchased peace at the cost of 2,000 Rhenish florins (with 2.53 grams fine gold each, then worth about £490 gros Flemish); Paul Kalkoff *Ulrich von Hutten und die Reformation* Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 4 (Leipzig 1920; repr New York 1971) 429–32. Cf Allen Ep 1445:40.

[292] Cf Allen Ep 1445:40–1, where Erasmus states that Hutten had cut off the ears of two Dominicans. According to Kalkoff (see preceding note) 426, Erasmus is the only source for this incident.

[293] This incident in Hutten's 'war on the Romanists' took place in 1522. Erasmus' information came from Eppendorf (Ep 1283 n4); see Allen Ep 1934:260–70. Cf Allen Epp 1356:51–4, 1445:41–3.

[294] Ludwig V (1478–1544)

a friend, and one moreover who has done him service. In my whole *Spongia* no one is reviled as a robber or a ravisher, a highwayman or a bankrupt. What I say there in general terms aims not at the denigration of any single man but at the good of all. And some people find me savage in the *Spongia*! What trivial things he protests against, what savage language he chooses to magnify them! For my part, with so much widely familiar material, how could I have failed to be eloquent, were I not by nature so violently opposed to speaking ill of anyone? I refer to the circulation of that letter to the cardinal of Mainz[295] in language which only the man himself is likely to understand. Another thing he did that was even more treacherous[296] I do not touch on, for I had forgiven him both in the name of our friendship; and he thought it honourable, because I asked to be excused from a discussion with him, to rant like this against a friend. All this to give pleasure to two or three people[297] with whom he had struck up a new friendship which was not destined to do him much good. If I had replied to his false accusations with falsehoods of my own, it would have been tit for tat, except that a man's case is the more likely to win sympathy who has suffered an injury before he enters the fray. And now I am thought vindictive, I, who after suffering injury from so many false accusations do not make use even of his real and

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[295] Ep 1033. Cf *Spongia* ASD IX-9 192–3.

[296] Cf *Spongia* ASD IX-1 193–4. Hutten's 'other treachery' is identified in a letter of 8 May 1524 to Luther (Allen Ep 1445:49–52), where Erasmus alleges that in the spring of 1520 Hutten, already conspiring against the emperor, had 'extorted' from Erasmus several letters of recommendation to the imperial court (Epp 1114–5), his sole purpose being to exploit the emperor's name in the hunt for a wife. This version of events reads back into 1520 the hostility to Charles V which Hutten did not conceive until after the condemnation of Luther at the Diet of Worms in 1521. When he secured the letters of recommendation from Erasmus in Louvain, Hutten was on his way to the Hapsburg court at Brussels (Ep 1113:42), where he hoped to find employment and support for his great project of a united Germany, free of Rome, under the leadership of Charles V. It is possible that Erasmus was later reproached for having lent his support to someone already regarded at court as a dangerous man, but, at the time of his visit to Erasmus in Louvain, Hutten would not yet have known that he was so regarded (Kaegi 496 n3).

[297] Although he believed that all his 'Lutheran' opponents had urged Hutten to write against him and that members of the reformed party in Basel had supplied Hutten with some of the information used in the *Expostulatio*, Erasmus' particular wrath fell upon Heinrich Eppendorf (Ep 1283 n4), who had been his intermediary with Hutten in Basel and Mulhouse, and who, Erasmus believed, had deliberately engineered the breach between him and Hutten; Allen Epp 1376:17–31, 1384:67–8, 1389:52–9, 1437:24ff, and *Spongia* ASD IX-1 172:130–3.

notorious crimes in my own defence. To get me into trouble they have already published a letter from Martin Luther,[298] written privately to a friend, about my *Spongia*. How much weight should be attached to this opinion of Luther's I do not now inquire. I at least remain unmoved by it; what I want to know is, why those who published this letter did not make public at the same time letters from Philippus Melanchthon, in which he utterly rejects this attempt of Hutten's as pestilential to the cause of the gospel, and more than once calls it madness. I have in my possession three letters of his written to different friends in which he abominates the rabid pamphlets to which this new gospel subjects us from time to time.[299] Not but what he has written at greater length to others. The cunning fellows keep these pieces dark, venting their fury meanwhile in frenzied pamphlets with no author's name or a fictitious one,[300] and then go on to boast that they are ready to die ten deaths for the gospel's sake. Why then do they not make their case in Rome? The spoken word carries great force. Why do they not vent their fury on the emperor no less than the pope? Because it is more dangerous? What then has become of their readiness for martyrdom? They ought at least to show him their case, even if they are reluctant to challenge him. It has not escaped me that this was the strategy of some men I could name who falsely boast themselves to be champions of the gospel – to overwhelm me with frenzied pamphlets to stop me from making any move against Luther.[301] Let them suppose that I have been stoned to death: will they at once be more successful? They do not stop to consider how much

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[298] Luther to Conradus Pellicanus (n309 below) in Basel, 1 October 1523; published, without Pellicanus' name, with the *Judicium* of Erasmus Alber (n285 above). Text in Böcking II 379–80, WA-Br III 160–1.

[299] Two of these letters can be identified with certainty: one to Oswald Ülin in Ravensburg, 24 August 1523 (CR I 627), a copy of which Botzheim sent to Erasmus (Scheible I no 297); and the other to Johannes Oecolampadius in Basel, 8 September 1523 (BAO no 173), in which Oecolampadius is asked to convey the Wittenbergers' disapproval of Hutten's pamphlet to Erasmus. Three other letters in which Melanchthon condemns the *Expostulatio* are extant: two to Georgius Spalatinus (CR I nos 245, 253) and one to Joachim Camerarius (ibidem no 254). One of these could have been the third letter in Erasmus' possession.

[300] See n285 above. Cf also lines 114–17.

[301] Cf Allen Ep 1437:101–3, 2 April 1524, where Erasmus reports having learned from Johannes Fabri (Ep 1260 n22) that the policy of Luther's followers was to use threats to frighten him off from attacking Luther in print. In November 1523, Erasmus had informed Fabri that he was at work on the *De libero arbitrio* (Allen Ep 1397:15), which is presumably the publication that the Lutherans wished to prevent with their threats and 'frenzied pamphlets.' In this

harm I could have done, and still can do, to their cause if I had as great a passion for vengeance as they have for violence. Who would not recognize in this that spirit of the Gospels which the world has not seen for a thousand years? Very well: let it be gospel teaching that we should pour frenzied scurrilities upon the guilty. When it comes to discharging barefaced lies on those who are quite innocent, does this too follow the gospel pattern? The physician in the gospel pours wine into the wounds, but he pours in oil as well, and it is wine not vinegar. Some of these men pour in not wine but deadly poison. They kill no man with the sword, but more villainously with tongue and pen.

And yet they have nothing they can bring against me except that I am reluctant to risk my own neck by professing beliefs which I do not hold, or regard as doubtful, or reject, and which would do no good if I did profess them. Apart from that, has anyone been a more active opponent in print of putting one's trust in ceremonies; of superstition concerning food and liturgy and prayer; of those who give more weight to human inventions than to Holy Scripture, who value the decrees of man more than the commandments of God, who put more trust in the saints than in Christ himself; of academic theology, corrupted as it is by philosophic and scholastic quibbling; of the rash practice of laying down rules for every mortal thing; of the topsy-turvy judgments of the multitude? How far I am from flattery of princes, even the greatest of them, my books are enough to show. This, and very much else, which I have taught according to the measure of grace accorded me, I have taught steadfastly, but never standing in the way of any man who had something better to teach. And they say Erasmus has taught nothing but rhetoric! I wish they would persuade my friends of that, the foolish babblers, who steadfastly maintain that all Luther's teaching has been drawn from what I have written. Not that I grudge Luther any credit on that score; he is welcome to the whole of it, provided the gospel is glorified. My misdeeds amount to this: I am all for moderation, and the reason why I have a bad name with both sides is that I exhort both parties to adopt a more peaceable policy. Freedom I have no objection to, if it is seasoned with charity. But this mad-dog scurrility can produce nothing but sedition and bloodshed. If we speak ill of the Roman church, and Rome in turn advertises what we have done wrong, this will surely provide an agreeable spectacle

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connection, Erasmus was, in the spring and summer of 1524, particularly suspicious of Wolfgang Capito (Ep 1290), whom he believed to be an accomplice of Eppendorf and also the moving spirit behind the publication of Brunfels' *Responsio* to the *Spongia*; Allen Epp 1437:99–101, 1459:63–6, 1485, 1496:108–13.

for the enemies of our religion. Clement professes himself ready to heal the corruption of the church; he dispatches a legate who is as fair-minded and civilized as one could wish – and all they do is to abuse him,[302] as though what they really enjoyed was universal chaos. On their head be it, if the princes at length lose all patience and start venting their fury without distinction on the livelihood and lives of most of us. If that happens, I fear some people will approve my moderate policy, and it will be too late. Who can endure certain men on that side whom I could name who, using the gospel as a pretext, obey neither princes nor popes, and do not listen to Luther himself except when it suits them?[303] On all other occasions they regard even Luther as a mere man led by no inspiration, or consider that he did not mean what he said. My offence is rank indeed if I merely wish to see what is now done in a subversive spirit done without subversion and with the consent of princes. But if the princes seem unlikely to act for the best, what crime have I committed if I warn them? I do not restrain those who wish to put out the fire; but I do condemn those who pour oil on the flames and are in a great hurry to remove by violent drugs a disease which has by now grown chronic over a thousand years and more, to the very great peril of the whole body. The apostles showed toleration to the Jews, who could not be weaned away from their ingrained taste for the Law; and the same, I believe, they would rightly show to these men who for so many centuries have accepted the authority of all those councils and popes and distinguished teachers, and find some difficulty in swallowing the new wine of this modern teaching. And for the time being I assume that one party is wrong and the other entirely right in what they maintain. Let both sides pursue Christ's business on Christian principles, and they will see what I have to contribute as my own humble share.

But I am carried away, and must return to Hutten. How I wish those men who first aroused this tragic business and revive it now[304] would leave Hutten's ghost in peace and not force me into a position where, as the saying goes, I must do battle with the dead! I do not think, however, that it is fighting with the dead to reply to a libellous book which someone has left behind him at his death like a poisoned javelin; but wantonly to accuse a dead man who cannot reply – that would be to fight with the dead. When I heard the news of Hutten's death, I prayed in a Christian spirit for God's mercy on his soul; and I hear that on his deathbed he expressed regret that he had been deceived by the cunning of certain persons into attacking a friend.

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[302] Lorenzo Cardinal Campeggi (Ep 961), to whom Erasmus had dedicated his paraphrase on Ephesians (Ep 1062). Appointed legate in January 1524, Campeggi was treated to a good deal of derision and abuse when he arrived in the Empire; Pastor x 111–12.

[303] Erasmus was by this time (September 1524) thoroughly fed up with nearly all the leaders of the reform movement in Switzerland and Alsace, from Zwingli on down. His sentiments are expressed more fully in a letter to Melanchthon; Allen Ep 1496:67–166.

[304] See nn285 and 297 above.

I have, I perceive, wandered somewhat far from my theme; all the same, I cannot refrain from pouring out in your friendly ear something I have learned these last few days, to give you a clear idea how far from the spirit of the gospel these men are, who seek out and invent causes of discord and yet make such great play with the word 'gospel.' This is the story. The person responsible[305] you will easily guess. It had often been reported to me that he spoke of me in an unfriendly spirit, but I thought nothing of it, so much so that I did not even protest in conversation. At length, when the news reached me that he had described me in offensive terms as the prophet Balaam,[306] as though I had been hired to curse God's people, I did not think such a monstrous calumny could be overlooked. Meeting the man by chance, I took him aside and asked him if what had been told me was true. He shuffled, and said neither no nor yes. When pressed, he at length replied that it had been said by a French merchant,[307] who by that time had left. And it may be true that a merchant said it, but it was this man he learned it from. When I insisted that he should give reasons why he thought I deserved such

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[305] Guillaume Farel (1489–1565), the future 'evangelist of French Switzerland.' Born in the Dauphiné, educated at Paris, and for a time member of the group of humanists and reformers at the court of bishop Guillaume Briçonnet at Meaux, Farel had by the end of 1521 embraced the Protestant faith. In the autumn of 1523 he emigrated to Basel, where he joined Oecolampadius and other reformers, distinguishing himself by the intemperate zeal of his preaching. Irritated by Erasmus' growing aversion to the radicalism of the reformers and by rumours that Erasmus was conspiring with the pope to extinguish the Lutheran movement, Farel began to describe Erasmus as a 'Balaam,' thus precipitating the confrontation (May or June 1524) described here (lines 1196–1215) and in Ep 1510. Farel reacted to that confrontation with pamphlets, now lost (Allen Ep 1496:131–40). Meanwhile, on about 9 July 1524 the Basel city council, doubtless encouraged by Erasmus, expelled Farel from the city. Subsequently Erasmus missed no opportunity to vilify Farel, whom he often called 'Phallicus'; Epp 1510, 1522, 1531, 1534, 1548. Cf the colloquy 'Ἰχθυοφαγία, 'A Fish Diet' of 1526 (ASD I-3 521 / Thompson 341), where he is called 'Pharetrius.'

[306] The prophet whom the Moabite king, Balak, tried to bribe to curse the Israelites, but whom God compelled to bless them three times (Num 22–24)

[307] Antoine Du Blet (d 1526), a Lyon banker who in the spring of 1524 accompanied Farel on a visit to Zwingli in Zürich. Cf Allen Ep 1510:18–19.

abuse, he replied that he had heard of my boasting that I had a plan by which this conflagration lit by Luther, that is to say, the gospel (for so he explained it), could be entirely extinguished. I answered (for I did not yet understand the source of the trouble) that I had promised the princes a plan for the settlement of this discord with the minimum of upheaval and without infringing the liberty of the gospel,[308] provided they were willing to have it conveyed to them in secret and under safeguards; but that my plan was such as I fear the princes will not accept.

A few days later, as luck would have it, I learned the source of the trouble from something my friend Pellicanus[309] said. He told me that a distinguished Polish nobleman Hieronim,[310] palatine of Sieradz, while he was here, threatened to take steps against the supporters of Luther on his return home. As he was known to be very friendly with me and had visited me frequently, some people thought that he had been aroused by something I said and was armed with some plan of mine. Now, my dear Botzheim, I will tell you the truth, and you shall see, as often happens, 'how long a tale from nothing takes its rise.'[311] After I had taken Hieronim into my library, he threw in some mention of Luther, and asked if he was a good scholar. I spoke well of his learning. What did I think of his opinions? I said the question was outside my cognizance, though it could not be denied that much of his teaching was excellent, his advice often sound, and that he had forcibly attacked certain abuses. He asked me which of his books I particularly approved of. I mentioned the commentary on twenty psalms[312] and the book on the fourteen images,[313] adding that these works were approved even by people who condemned the rest; 'although even in these,' I said, 'he brings in some of his peculiar doctrines.' He repeated the word 'peculiar,' and laughed. This was our first conversation about Luther,

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[308] See Ep 1352 introduction.

[309] Conradus Pellicanus (1478–1556), Franciscan, professor of theology and Hebrew at Basel until 1526, when he went to Zürich and joined the reformers

[310] Hieronim Łaski (1496–1541), member of a distinguished Polish family with a record of public service. Often sent on diplomatic missions by the king of Poland, Łaski made the acquaintance of Erasmus in 1520 in Brussels and Cologne during such a mission to Charles v (lines 1274–6 of this letter). In 1523 he succeeded his father as palatine of Sieradz. In May 1524, on an embassy to Francis I, he again visited Erasmus, this time at Basel, and had the interviews recorded here (cf Allen Ep 1452:13–15). Erasmus dedicated the *Modus orandi Deum* to him; Ep 1502.

[311] Propertius 2.1.16

[312] The *Operationes in Psalmos*, published at Wittenberg in 1519–21 and reprinted by Adam Petri in Basel in 1521 (text in WA v). Cf Ep 980:59–61.

[313] See Ep 1332 n13.

from which he got no clear idea of my feelings towards Luther, nor I of his. Later, when he paid me a second visit, there happened to be lying on the table among various papers a letter which Luther had recently written to me.[314] Some words in this had somehow caught his eye, in which Luther seemed to have a far from complimentary opinion of me. Soon, as we talked, I got the impression that he wanted to purloin this letter, and without saying anything I got it back from him and put it in its place. After that we went into my study, and conversed for some time on subjects that had nothing to do with Luther. During this time I noticed that he again had the same letter in his hand secretly. 'It looks to me,' I said with a smile, 'as though you had it in mind to steal something.' He laughed, and admitted it. I asked him what his purpose was in taking it. 'I will tell you,' he replied. 'Many people have actually tried to persuade our king that you are in a very close alliance with Luther, and this letter will prove them wrong.' 'On that point,' I said, 'I will make you rather better informed. I will give you the original of this letter as soon as it has been copied, and with it two others in which he uses even more offensive language about me, one of which had been printed in Strasbourg[315] and the other was published lately by someone, I know not who.[316] These,' I said, 'will enable you to prove, to the emperor if you like,' for he was setting off there on a misson, 'that my relations with Luther are not as close as many people maintain.' On another occasion, when he asked me in conversation whether I was writing anything against Luther, I told him that I was so much distracted by essential work as to have no time for anything else. He then explained to me how violently hostile the king of Poland was towards Luther, describing how the entire fortune of one very rich man had been confiscated for the king's treasury because one pamphlet of Luther's had been found in his house. On that I made it pretty clear that I did not approve either the cruelty of it, or the precedent of seizing some pretext to invade people's homes. Finally, as he was about to mount his horses, he returned to me, and put a silver cup on the table. 'Please,' he said, 'let me leave this with you as a token of my sentiments.' When I refused it, on the ground that I had never done anything to deserve it, and that there was no service I could possibly render him, 'I ask nothing of you,' he said,

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[314] Ep 1443, answered by Ep 1445

[315] A letter addressed to 'X' in Leipzig, 28 May 1522 (WA-Br II 542–5), published by Hans Schott in 1523 under the title *Iudicium D. Martini Lutheri de Erasmo Roterodamo ad amicum*

[316] Perhaps the letter of 20 June 1523 to Oecolampadius (WA-Br III 96–7 / BAO no 157), though there is no record of its having been published at the time.

'except to be friends with the man who gave you this.' At length he gave it to me, with a proclamation by the king, in print.

This was the whole of our conversation about Luther. So he left me, better informed and embittered against Luther. This then, as I now see, was the man whom they cast for the part of Balak,[317] and supposed had hired me with a silver cup to curse the people of the gospel. And yet this friendship between us was none of Luther's making; three years before we had made each other's acquaintance,[318] first in Brussels and then in Cologne, when he was serving at the time as his king's envoy to the emperor. I found him a young man unusually well educated and possessed by a singular devotion, a sort of religious veneration, for the humanities. On this mission he had brought with him his two brothers, Jan,[319] who was somewhat younger, and Stanisław,[320] well read both of them and with the same feeling for humane studies that he has himself; and as it was generally believed that I was some good at them, their very eyes and their expression and, as the phrase goes, everything about them breathed a wonderful sort of affectionate good will towards me. It is not only that I accepted the good opinion of such men as they gladly enough; I rejoice to think that good literature begins to be respected by men even of the highest rank. Now, if he was unfair to Luther, he brought that attitude with him and did not imbibe it here. My influence made him milder, sooner than more indignant. Ought I to have refused to speak to him because he did not think highly of Luther? Why, at that same time I did not refuse to see men who had come from Wittenberg and were absolutely devoted to Luther, and would have been most eager to see Philippus Melanchthon himself had he come here. I have never rejected anyone's friendship either because he was too well disposed towards Luther or because he found him unsympathetic, provided he proves himself a loyal and agreeable friend. But those men you know of, ungrateful, treacherous, capricious, crazy, subversive, scurrilous, and false, the most dangerous enemies of the gospel and the humanities and the public peace – them I hate, on whichever side they may be. That present from Hieronim, which he meant to remain in my keeping as a memento of himself – ought I to have refused it like a rustic and a boor because he held the wrong views about

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[317] See n306 above.

[318] This must have been *four* years earlier, in 1520. Erasmus did not visit Cologne on his journey to Basel in 1521 (Ep 1342:180–1). But he was in both Brussels and Cologne (in the train of Charles v) in the autumn of 1520; Epp 1136, 1155.

[319] Jan Łaski (1499–1560), who later became a famous Calvinist reformer

[320] Like his brother Hieronim, whom he succeeded as palatine of Sieradz in 1543, Stanisław Łaski (c 1500–1550) had a career in public service.

Luther? At any rate, none of the princes has yet been able to plant anything on me on the understanding that I would write an attack on Luther, as some of these gospellers none the less maintain, lying most brazenly in defiance of their own consciences. So there is the whole foolish story.

I know what you will be saying already: What has this to do with the play? You are quite right; and I return to my catalogue.[m] In the class of defences may be included the letter which I lately wrote to that paragon of all the gifts proper to a prelate, Christopher, bishop of Basel,[321] on the eating of meat; which nevertheless I had not written with a view to publication. But when I found that it was in circulation and would infallibly be published by someone else, I preferred to revise it and publish it myself,[322] especially since I was recommended to do so by some of the leading men in this university.[323]

I will now indicate what has appeared in a mutilated state, and what is still in my hands and is not yet finished. My small work on abundance of style[324] lacks the example of a subject sketched with the greatest brevity and then treated a second time at full length. I had chosen a topic, the need to teach children their letters from the start, and I still have it by me, but two pages in the middle written in a very minute hand went astray in Rome through the carelessness of those who had copied out the text.[325] Of the *Antibarbari*[326] I had revised and enlarged two books in Bologna, and had a mass of material collected long ago for the remainder. This, and some other things with it, went astray through dishonesty, not on the part of Richard Pace, my most honourable friend, with whom I had left it in Ferrara on my departure for Rome, but thanks to another man,[327] who had too much of an

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[321] Christoph von Utenheim (Ep 1332)

[322] *Epistola apologetica de interdictu esu carnium deque similibus hominum constitutionibus*, written in April 1522 and printed by Froben in August. See Epp 1274 n7 and 1353 n13.

[323] In Allen Ep 1581:717–25, Erasmus states that the letter was published at the request of the bishop after it had been examined by Ludwig Baer (Ep 488), professor of theology at the University of Basel.

[324] See n58 above.

[325] This material eventually became *De pueris instituendis* (Basel: Froben and Episcopius, September 1529); Allen Ep 2189:24–34. Critical edition by Jean-Claude Margolin in ASD I-2 1–78; English translation by Beert C. Verstraete in CWE 26 291–346. *De pueris* opens with a 'declamatio, contracti thematis exemplum' (ASD I-2 23–4 / CWE 26 297–8), which is followed by 'idem argumentum locupletatum copia' (ASD I-2 25–78 / CWE 26 298–345).

[326] On the genesis and subsequent history of the *Antibarbari*, which Erasmus began when he was about nineteen, see Ep 30:17n and CWE 23 2–15.

[327] William Thale; see the references in the preceding note.

eye to his own interests to be true to those of any of his friends; though later, as luck would have it, I secured from England the beginning of the second book and in Bruges the end of it, with the loss of many pages in between. If only I could find the second book, I could easily finish the rest; and I have no doubt it is lurking in some thieves' kitchen or other, for I put two copies into safe keeping.[328]

I still have by me several things which I started long ago; among them is a commentary on Paul's Epistle to the Romans, of which I had finished four books, if I mistake not, twenty-two years ago.[329] For a work on the theory of preaching[330] I had only jotted down some divisions of the subject-matter. And yet, if Christ grants me life and tranquillity, I have a mind to finish a work on preaching, which may do some good, especially as I am urged to do so by men whose opinion carries great weight. Some time ago I began three dialogues in which I attempted a discussion rather than a confrontation on the question of Martin Luther,[331] but under altered names: Luther's part will be taken by Thrasymachus, the other side by Eubulus, and Philalethes will act as arbiter. The first dialogue investigates whether this approach would be expedient, even had every word Luther writes been true. The second will discuss some of his doctrines. The third will display a method of bringing this conflict to a peaceful end in such a way that it cannot easily break out again in future. The question will be discussed between the two of them without scurrilities, with no wrangling and no disguise; the bare truth only will be put forward, in a simple and countrified way, with such fairness and such moderation that there will be more danger, I think, from the indignation of the opposite party, who will interpret my mildness as collusion with the enemy, than from Luther himself, if he has any grain of the sense with which many people credit him – and I for one wish him joy of it if he has it, and hope he may acquire it if not. I perceive that certain people are more in favour of severity, and as far as I am concerned, every man is welcome to enjoy his own opinion. To be severe is easier, but the other seems to me the more profitable course. If some physical complaint is active in one particular part of the body, cautery or amputation may prove to be the answer; but when the trouble is diffused through the whole body, when it permeates the inmost veins and tissues, we should perhaps need a second Mercury to draw the poison by stages from our vitals, just as he relieved Psyche's whole body from that deadly slumber.[332]

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[328] Only the first book was published in Froben's edition of May 1520 (Ep 1110). Critical edition by Kazimierz Kumaniecki in ASD I-1 1–138; translation by Margaret Mann Phillips in CWE 23 16–122. Subsequent efforts to find book 2 (Ep 1210:18) failed.

[329] The date is correct; see Epp 164:41–2, 181:36–8. The commentaries were never completed or published, despite the entry at line 1585. Cf lines 1638–9.

[330] The *Ecclesiastes sive de ratio concionandi*, begun in 1523 (see Epp 1321 n1, 1332:36) but not published until 1535 (Basel: Froben)

[331] Erasmus conceived the idea of 'a short treatise on how to end this business of Luther' sometime before April 1522; Epp 1268:86–8, 1275:23–5. By 17 March 1523 Jan de Fevijn (Ep 1317 n7) had heard of the three-dialogue format and wrote to Frans van Cranevelt (Ep 1317) about it; de Vocht *Literae ad Craneveldium* Ep 49:9–13.

I undertook this work with encouragement from many sources. First (for I cannot mention them all) there was Marino Caracciolo,[333] the papal nuncio at the emperor's court; then that distinguished figure Girolamo Aleandro,[334] unquestionably the best scholar of our age in the three tongues, who likewise was serving at that time with the emperor Charles as papal nuncio; then Jean Glapion,[335] the emperor's confessor, for he often wrote to me on the subject at the emperor's wish in an earnest and warmhearted way.[336] I was encouraged to it long ago by William Mountjoy,[337] and recently by George, most illustrious duke of Saxony.[338] There have however been many interruptions, which did not allow me to progress in the work I had undertaken beyond two or three short pages, so that the work was not so much undertaken as planned – though in other ways I am by nature greatly disinclined to this sort of composition. Bloody disputes I hate, and am more attracted by humour that hurts no one, as though I were born for that. And then I am well aware how great a Hercules this project demands, and that I myself am a mere pigmy. In fact I have simply not made up my mind as yet whether I wish to finish what I have started.[339] Whatever happens will not happen unadvisedly, nor will anything appear at all unless it has been read in private and approved by those whose proper business it most is to uphold Christ's glory; for that at least is the object I shall aim at as I beat it into shape

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[332] Actually, it was Eros/Cupid who awoke Psyche from her deadly slumber. According to Apuleius, Venus sent Mercury in search of Psyche (6.7f) and it was Mercury who led her to heaven (6.23). This may explain Erasmus' lapse of memory.

[333] Ep 1263 n1

[334] Ep 1256 n11

[335] Ep 1275

[336] Cf Ep 1269:6–11.

[337] Ep 1219:8–9

[338] Ep 1298:30–40

[339] For the reasons discussed here (down to line 36:17) and in the *Spongia* (ASD IX-1 164), the project was abandoned. It is possible that the *Inquisitio de fide,* first published in the March 1524 edition of the *Colloquia,* is an abbreviated version of the second of the projected dialogues; see *Inquisitio de fide* ed Craig R. Thompson, 2nd ed (Hamden, Conn: Archon Books 1975) 37–8.

– if I ever do so, for I see that both parties are now inflamed to the point where each is set on either total victory or total destruction. In fact, the defeat of one of them will bring a great collapse of gospel truth and liberty in its train, while the other will not be put down except by a most destructive and world-wide catastrophe, which will engulf many innocent people as well. Personally I would rather see the question settled in such a way that each side yields the victory to truth and to Christ's glory. On this subject I have offered the monarchs a secret plan of my own,[340] if only they would instruct me to submit it; and so I would rather for the moment that in the light of this promise of mine no one should assume my support for one side or the other. Let there be no premature judgment; the verdict shall be based on my book when it appears.

[n]What I have recounted so far about this work was published in the first issue of this catalogue. In this there was nothing to upset any fair-minded person; and yet certain of these gospellers, as they love to be called, regardless of the teaching of the gospel, were driven nearly mad by it, as though it were a crime worthy of death by public stoning to hold any debate with Luther, even with the object of learning something. I will now reveal to my friends the secret purpose of this project, and especially to you, my dear Botzheim, for you rebuked me with a forbidding frown, which was most unlike you, because you thought I was showing levity on a serious matter. I would reluctantly admit that anyone was more devoted to the gospel than I am myself; but my hope was that this business might be handled with such moderation as would allow everyone to take part in it without civil strife. And so I wrote publicly, offering the prospect of something to this effect, angling for the result I so much desired, that both sides from a love of peace and concord should urge me to publish the volume I had promised; and some moves were made in this direction with the emperor. But when I perceived that neither party of itself offered any hope of laying this dispute to rest, I was unwilling to waste my labour and risk unpopularity from both sides for my efforts. Such were the cunning moves of which they spoke, and they had no source save a spirit that detests discord and has a passion for peace. As it is, I pray that the Lord Jesus, who alone has the power, may issue his commands to still these storms and calm this tempest in the church.[n]

I also made an attempt to publish the entire works of St Augustine,[341] corrected by means of ancient copies and with added notes, identifying and separating out those which pass falsely under his name. The whole corpus

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[340] Ep 1352

[341] See Ep 1309 introduction.

of his writings was divided into seven parts or volumes.[342] The first was destined for his practice-pieces, those which he wrote as a catechumen or about that time. The second for his letters, some of which he wrote as a young man. The third was reserved for what Greek calls his theoretical works, which we should call contemplative, in which class are his *Confessiones* and *Soliloquia* and others like them, to which it was my purpose to add the pieces concerned with the conduct of life. The fourth was appointed for the didactic works, those, that is, in which he gives instruction in theology; and this class includes the *De doctrina christiana* and the *De Trinitate*. The fifth should have had the polemical works, in which he does battle against the leaders of sundry poisonous heresies; under this heading he wrote a good deal, including the *De civitate Dei*. The sixth would have displayed the exegetical works, in which he expounds books of the Holy Scriptures. The seventh would have been for the spurious and doubtful pieces, those, that is, which are either wrongly attributed to him or of such a kind that one might well hesitate about the authorship. In the same volume would have been a table of those which have been lost with the passage of time. The size of the undertaking was a deterrent, but the learning and piety of the author were attractive, and the prospect of being useful urged me on. And so I divided the enormous task among several scholars,[343] in such a way that each should receive his share of the credit unimpaired. Such was the labour which I undertook without payment to assist the cause of public learning; and yet certain people set on me like barking dogs because I do not write, as they would prefer, about indulgences or collecting cheeses.[344]

As for correspondence, I have written so much,[345] and even today I write so much, that in future two wagons will scarcely suffice for the load. I myself acquired many by chance and burned them, for I observed that they were preserved by many people. In Bologna I had written a brief declamation of the hortatory kind, in which I discouraged a man from

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[342] The complete Augustine published by Froben in 1528/9 comprised ten volumes.

[343] Vives assumed responsibility for *De civitate Dei*, which was published separately in September 1522 (Ep 1309) and later became volume 5 of the complete edition. In the end, Erasmus edited all the other volumes, though he had many helpers; see Allen Ep 2157 introduction.

[344] Ep 1342:138–9

[345] Six more or less official collections of Erasmus' letters had already been published (see CWE 3 348–50), and six more were to come before his death (see Allen I 599–601).

adopting the religious life and then again urged him to adopt it.[346] In my view it was worth printing, if anything of mine ever is; but the outside pages have been lost at either end, and what remains is still among my papers. When I was living in Rome,[347] to please Raffaele, cardinal of San Giorgio,[348] I wrote a speech against the proposal to declare war on Venice, for which he asked me in Julius' name;[349] for the question was then under discussion in the sacred college. I then put the opposite case; and the second speech won the day, although I had spent more effort on the first and written it more from the heart; through the treachery of a man I could name,[350] the original text was lost. I have begun again to jot down some of the heads of the argument from memory, and I suppose that it is lurking somewhere among my papers. Very many things have fallen by the way which I do not regret; but I could wish that some speeches in sermon form still survived which I I delivered long ago in Paris,[351] when I was living in the Collège de Montaigu.[352]

Such, my excellent Botzheim, is the list of my trifling productions, and I hope it may arouse your acquisitive instinct. Now, when you complain that your purse is empty because you have to buy the same book so often, I should like you to look at it like this. Suppose that my *Proverbia*[353] had just appeared for the first time, and that the moment the book was published I had died: would you have regretted your expenditure? I doubt it. Now suppose something else, that after several years I came to life again and that at the same time the book revived with me, better and fuller, would you regret what you had spent, or would you be delighted to see again both your friend and his immortal work? Now I know what you will say: 'I should be delighted to see you alive again; but none of this has really happened.' Which then do you suppose to be the more blessed state, to rise again from the dead, or not to die? If you would be pleased to see me risen, you must be much more pleased to see me still alive. Last but not least, if the later edition

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[346] Probably an amplified version of the *Laus vitae monasticae*; see line 663 and n145 of this letter. Erasmus was in Bologna from November 1506 to November 1507.

[347] Spring and early summer 1509

[348] Raffaele Riario (Ep 333)

[349] Ie, Pope Julius II

[350] Doubtless William Thale; see Ep 30:17n and line 1325 of this letter.

[351] Listed in the *Lucubrationum Erasmi Roterodami index* (see the introduction to this letter) as 'Conciones aliquot olim habitae Lutetiae de laudibus divorum; sed hae sunt ab amicis interceptae'

[352] 1495–6; see Epp 43–8.

[353] Ie, the *Adagia*

contains nothing worth the extra money, you are free not to buy it; but if it does, you are making a gain and not a loss. If that earlier edition brought you good value for that small outlay, and if the later edition does the same, surely you have made two good bargains, not suffered a loss. 'You might,' you will say, 'have given us a book that was perfect in the first edition.' But it is like life: as long as we live, we are always devoted to self-improvement, and we shall not cease to make our writings more polished and more complete until we cease to breathe. No one is so good a man that he could not be made better; and no book has had so much work put into it that it cannot be made more perfect. Not but what I did myself openly admit long ago that on this point I take less trouble than I ought to; yet all the time other people make in my opinion a worse mistake who are far better scholars than I and yet, through some sort of religious scruple either publish nothing or leave it till very late. Do not hope therefore that I of all people shall relieve you of this inconvenience, until I leave the stage and once and for all utter my 'So farewell and clap your hands' to the whole lot of you (and this, believe me, would have happened shortly, had not the wine of Burgundy come to my rescue like some god from the machine); so you must make up your mind whether you would rather wish for that moment, or from time to time buy a book that has been enlarged and revised. In fact, if you recall what a lot of money you had spent on trash in the old days, you will not, I think, regret this expense quite so much.

°Already I hear some of my friends from time to time grumbling about the division of my entire works into volumes. Whether there is anything in my writings that is worthy of posterity, be it for others to decide; at least, if they do descend to our successors, I could wish I had some loyal and scholarly Tiro[354] to do for me when I am dead what he did for Cicero his master. And yet, in case anyone thinks it worth trying, why, I will show him the most convenient way to do it.

In the first volume can be put everything that concerns literature and education, for example:

De copia, two books
Ratio conscribendis epistolas
Ratio studiorum, addressed to Pierre Vitré
Theodorus' *Grammar*, two books, in my version
Syntaxis

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[354] Marcus Tullius Tiro was Cicero's freedman, secretary, and friend. He wrote a life of Cicero and, according to tradition, collected his speeches and letters for publication.

All my versions from Lucian, the titles of which are *Saturnalia, Cronosolon* or *Leges Saturnaliciae, Epistolae Saturnales, De luctu, Icaromenippus, Toxaris, Pseudomantis, Somnium sive Gallus, Timon, Abdicatus, Tyrannicida, De mercede conductis in aulis potentum*, sundry dialogues (*Cnemonis et Damippi, Zenophantae et Callidemi[dae], Menippi et Tantali, Menippi et Mercurii, Menippi et Amphilochi et Trophonii, Charontis et Menippi, Cratetis ac Diogenis, Nirei ac Thersitae, Diogenis ac Mausoli, Simyli ac Polystrati, Veneris et Cupidinis, Martis ac Mercurii, Mercurii et Maiae, Veneris et Cupidinis, Doridis et Galateae, Diogenis et Alexandri, Menippi et Chironis, Menippi et Cerberi*), *Hercules Gallicus, Eunuchus, De sacrificiis, Lapithae, De astrologia*. I should not wish the prefaces to these to be omitted, which make clear to whom each is dedicated.
A short declamation rendered from the Greek of Libanius, with several themes also translated
A declamation against a tyrannicide, in answer to Lucian's
Laus medicinae
Similia, one book
Colloquia, one book
Euripides, version of *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia*
Miscellaneous poems, on other than religious subjects, for those I have kept for their appropriate section
Commentarius in Nucem Ovidii

The second volume can de dedicated to the *Adagia*, which make a whole volume by themselves; and the subject-matter is not far from the main theme of volume one.

The third should be allotted to my *Epistolae*, for in these too there is much that is relevant to practice in composition; for most of them are trifles which I wrote as an adolescent or at least as a young man. These I will revise, and add a certain number, perhaps also removing some. To this class I should wish a number of preliminary dedications to be added, which printers often either omit or alter according to their fancy. Such, for example, are the prefaces to the works of St Hilary and St Cyprian, to the Greek Lexicon, the letter to Jean Desmarez prefixed to my *Panegyricus ad Philippum*, the preface added to my *De principe* intended for Charles' brother Ferdinand,[355] and anything else that may seem to deserve preservation.

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[355] Ep 853, an additional preface in the second edition

Volume four may be given to works which contribute to the building of character. To this class belong:

Most of the Lucian, though I have given it a place in the first volume
All my versions from Plutarch, the titles of which are *De discrimine adulatoris et amici, Quo pacto possit utilitas capi ex inimico, De tuenda bona valetudine, Principi maxime philosophandum, An graviores sint animi morbi quam corporis, De cupiditate divitiarum, Num recte dictum ab Epicuro λάθε βιώσας*.
Moriae encomium, a small book full of humour, but it teaches serious lessons, so do not be surprised to find it in this section.
Panegyricus, a speech of welcome to Philip, father of the emperor Charles, on his return from Spain
Institutio principis christiani, addressed to the emperor Charles
Isocrates de regno, addressed to him likewise
Consolatio de morte filii
Querimonia pacis
Dialogus Charontis et Alastoris
Carmen de senectute, addressed to Cop the physician
Paraenesis to Adolf, heer van Veere, who was then a child
De morte subita, to Joost Vroye
This is the place for Cicero's *Officia*, revised by me and supplied with summaries and notes. Why should one not also add the *Catunculus*, the *Mimi Publiani*, and other things of the sort?

The fifth volume can be allocated to works of religious instruction. Among these are:

Enchiridion militis christiani
Letter to Paul Volz, abbot of Hugshofen
Methodus verae theologiae, from the edition of 1523 published by Michaël Hillen[356]
Paraclesis
Exomologesis
Commentarii in Psalmos primum et secundum
Paraphrasis in Psalmum tertium, dedicated to Vianden
Commentarius in Epistolam ad Romanos
Paraphrasis in Precationem dominicam
Commentarius in duos hymnos Prudentii
Concio de puero Iesu
Concio de misericordia Domini

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[356] See Allen Ep 1365 introduction.

Comparatio virginitatis et martyrii, to the nuns of Cologne
Expostulatio Iesu, in verse
Casa natalitia
Michaelis encomium
Liturgia virginis Lauretanae
Three prayers, two to the Virgin Mother and one to Jesus

The sixth volume shall be assigned to the New Testament as rendered by me, with my notes on it; a work which I have already revised and enriched for the fourth time. Anyone who does not like large books can divide this into two volumes.

The seventh is for the paraphrases on the whole New Testament, exclusive of the Apocalypse. These too can be divided into two volumes, if anyone so pleases.

Let the eighth volume be occupied by the defences. These too (alack the day!) will make a whole volume. Their titles are as follows, and I pray there may be nothing to add:

Ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem, one book
Ad Eduardum Leum, two books
Ad Iacobum Latomum de linguis
Adversus Nicolaum Ecmondanum de loco Pauli ad Corinthios: 'Omnes quidem resurgemus'
Adversus quorundam clamores de hoc quod verteram: 'In principio erat sermo'
Ad Ioannem Briardum Atensem pro Encomio matrimonii
Ad taxationes Stunicae in Novum Testamentum
Adversus libellum Impietatum et blasphemiarum eiusdem, of which the first words are: *Vix mihi delitigata*
Appendix adversus eiusdem libellum, entitled πρόδρομος. First words: *Dum haec excuderentur*
Adversus Conclusiones eiusdem. First words: *Reddidit mihi tuus*
Adversus Sanctium Caranzam theologum de tribus ab illo notatis. First words: *Post longas et inutiles rixas*. Here let my own words only be reprinted, omitting what was included from Zúñiga and Carranza in the first edition.
Epistola ad R.P. Christophorum, episcopum Basiliensem, de delectu ciborum ac caeteris
Epistola ad Marcum Laurinum contra rumorem, of which the first words are: *Nae tu plurimum debes*
Epistola ad Martinum Dorpium de Novo Testamento, which hitherto has been appended to the *Moria*
Apologiae, prefixed to the New Testament
Spongia adversus Ulricum Huttenum

Liber antibarbarorum
De libero arbitrio διατριβή

Volume nine shall be dedicated to the *Letters* of Jerome, on which I have expended so much labour that I can without impudence add this work to my own list; though Hilary too cost me a lot of work, and so did Cyprian. Of Quintus Curtius I will say nothing; in Seneca I can claim nothing for myself, except that in that field I lost much labour by trusting to the promises of my friends. If Christ grants me life and strength enough to finish my commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans, they will occupy volume ten.[357]

I know that you have long found such a prolix reckoning tedious, but this is what it means to make a catalogue, and indeed if anyone wishes to do all that diligence can achieve in this department, he can add the first words of the individual works, as I did for one or two of the more obscure so that they might not be overlooked. I perceive that you wish to be released; and I will release you, once I have given a brief answer to those who keep saying that I draw ample profits from the dedications of my works because I have dedicated such a great number to men in high places.[358] Certain people use this as an excuse to charge me with fishing either for reputation or for money, possibly for both.[359] To the point about reputation I have already given the reply elsewhere, that I am more zealous for the good standing of these studies than for my own.[360] It is for their advancement that I have sought the favour of the great, nor has my policy been unsuccessful. And to some men who have been good to me I have offered this compliment, not to return their kindness but to show that I have not forgotten it.

Of the financial return you shall now have some account. With friends in more modest situations you know yourself how far I am from being mercenary, for after trying every means you have never been able to make me accept anything. In this context sincerity of feeling is of more value to me than any gift. In fact, while it is a question of skill either to accept gracefully or to give a courteous refusal, my friends know that it comes far more easily to me to express refusal than acceptance. And if they ever offer me anything in such a way that I cannot refuse it, I always recompense them to the utmost of my power, and go further if I can. And so from the by no means scanty offerings I have made to my more modest friends I derive the most ample satisfaction of having given them pleasure, and having joined their memory with my own in a way that may perhaps survive to posterity. As for princes, let me say at the outset that to some who have not rewarded me my debt is no less than to those who have, and to those who have rewarded me I owe the more because they did so unasked. William Mountjoy, the distinguished English nobleman to whom I dedicated my *Proverbia* both when complete and in its many enlarged forms,[361] knows that I owe him a larger debt for kindness than for coin.[362] His Grace William, archbishop of Canterbury,[363] has shown the greatest readiness to help me;[364] yet even he will bear me witness how often I have refused his proffered generosity on the ground that I already had plenty of money.[365] Knowing that by the laws of friendship I shared all he had, I thought it safer to leave what I received in his keeping.[366] From Leo X, to whom I dedicated the New Testament,[367] I neither expected nor received a single ducat. The same from Adrian VI, to whom I sent a book[368] the binding of which cost me four florins,[369] with another for the courier on his outward journey and something too for his return. He accepted the volume with evident satisfaction,[370] and gave the bearer six ducats in cash;[371] to me he offered a piece of preferment[372] of a fairly

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[357] In March 1530 Erasmus attached to Ep 2283 a catalogue of his works arranged into nine series or *ordines* rather than ten volumes. The ten-volume scheme of 1524 served as the basis for both the Basel and the Leiden editions of the *Opera omnia*.

[358] A list of all Erasmus' dedicatory letters is found in Allen XII (indexes) 78–80.

[359] Neither the annotator nor any of the eminent authorities whom he consulted has been able to identify the 'certain people' in question.

[360] All the efforts of the annotator and his colleagues to locate the reply referred to here have been in vain.

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[361] See n129 above.

[362] In the *Compendium vitae* Erasmus calls Mountjoy his 'Maecenas, though more of a friend than a benefactor' (CWE 4 408:129). For details see CEBR sv 'Mountjoy.'

[363] Warham (Ep 188)

[364] Although Erasmus' first dedication of a work to Warham produced a disappointingly meagre reward (see lines 133–5 of this letter), the archbishop quickly became one of Erasmus' most generous patrons. In 1512 Warham bestowed upon Erasmus an annual pension from the revenues of the parish of Aldington in Kent (Ep 255 introduction).

[365] One such refusal is recorded in Ep 457:51–3.

[366] The payment of the pension from Warham remained a perpetual source of worry for Erasmus and of trouble for Warham.

[367] Ep 384

[368] The edition of Arnobius; see lines 571–3 of this letter and Epp 1304, 1310, 1329.

[369] *Quatuor florenis*, not specified as gold coins and indeterminate in value; possibly the Florentine, Rhenish, or Hapsburg coin, possibly one of the related moneys-of-account. See CWE 1 316–18, 347.

[370] Epp 1324, 1338

[371] Six ducats (*ducatos sex*) were then officially worth 40s gros Flemish, 27s sterling, and £12 9s tournois. See Ep 1295 n1.

[372] Epp 1324:117–28, 1338:47–64

honourable kind, which I refused[373] without more ado. I sent Clement VII his paraphrase[374] without a word, either from myself or through my friends, to suggest that I expected anything from him in the way of a present. So far was I from expecting it that, when Adrian was preparing to send me a present that brought much honour with it, I wrote and asked him not to do so;[375] Clement however sent me two hundred florins,[376] the only ground being that I had dedicated to him my paraphrase on Acts,[377] for he knew I should refuse had it been sent on any other pretext. This I can prove from the actual document itself. And yet some scandalmongering wretch,[378] who has learned Scripture only as material for his malignance, was found ready to say that Erasmus is our new Balaam.

Cardinal Grimani,[379] to whom I dedicated my paraphrase on the Epistle to the Romans,[380] did not send me a farthing, nor did I expect it. What I was hoping for, he gave me – support and good will, not for myself but for the humanities, and for Reuchlin. Cardinal Campeggi[381] many years ago sent me a ring[382] from England as a token of friendship; and to him I later dedicated a paraphrase,[383] not asking for his generosity, but seeking to repay it. The cardinal of Sion[384] made me many offers on condition that I came to Rome;[385] but through me he was not a farthing the poorer. Nor was I made a single drachma richer by the cardinal of the Santi Quattro,[386] to whom I dedicated my revision of Cyprian.[387] Jean de Carondelet,[388] archbishop of Palermo, found his purse not a halfpenny lighter as a result of my Hilary,[389] though I had sent my own servant to him with a copy. He gave

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[373] Ep 1352:136–67
[374] On Acts; see lines 770–1 and 1688 of this letter and Allen Ep 1414.
[375] See Ep 1324 n13.
[376] *Florenos ducentos*, not specified as gold coins, but presumably Florentine or papal florins, then worth about £66 14s gros Flemish, £45 sterling, and £415 tournois. See Ep 1295 n1.
[377] See Allen Epp 1438:16–23, 1466:3–7.
[378] Farel; see nn305, 306 above.
[379] Domenico Grimani, 1461–1523 (Ep 334)
[380] Ep 710
[381] See n302 above.
[382] Epp 995–6
[383] Ephesians; Ep 1062
[384] Ep 1295
[385] Epp 1299:49–50, 1300:66–8, 1302:71–4, 1305:5–6, 1311:23–4, 1342:346–52
[386] Lorenzo Pucci (d 1531)
[387] Ep 1000
[388] Ep 1276
[389] Ep 1334

me all I was fighting for, his support and his good will.[390] Philip of Burgundy,[391] bishop of Utrecht, to whose diocese I belong, in return for the dedication of the *Querimonia pacis*[392] offered me a prebend, and when I refused it, he gave me a ring with a sapphire mounted in it, which had been worn in old days by his brother David,[393] a former bishop of the see. This he sent me as a present, when I neither asked for it nor expected it. No less unsought and unexpected was the loving-cup sent me by the cardinal of Mainz.[394] To the cardinal of York, to whom I dedicated an essay of Plutarch's,[395] I reckon I owe everything in return for the singular kindness he has so long showed me; and yet hitherto his generosity has not made me one featherweight the richer. To the bishop of Liège,[396] who is now cardinal, I dedicated the Epistles to the Corinthians,[397] sent him a copy with gold ornament, and gave him two volumes of the New Testament on parchment, elegantly illuminated and by no means cheap; I readily acknowledge my indebtedness for the splendid promises he has made me more than once, but at the same time I have no reason to be grateful to him for the present of a single farthing. He gave me as much as, if it should fall into the most delicate eye, would cause no torment; and this he himself will not deny. My own prince Charles had already summoned me to become a member of his council and had presented me to a benefice[398] before I dedicated to him or even showed him my *De principe*;[399] so you can see this was returning gratitude and not angling for spoils. I also sent him a paraphrase[400] from Basel to Brussels by the hand of my own servant and at my own expense. When the man set out to return he was given two florins;[401] and yet the spirit in which the prince gladly accepted my gift[402]

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[390] Ep 1342:283–4

[391] Ep 603

[392] Ibidem

[393] Ep 603:14n

[394] Epp 986:40–5, 1033:5–28

[395] See lines 248–54 of this letter.

[396] Erard de la Marck (Ep 738)

[397] Ep 916

[398] A bishopric in Sicily, which Erasmus refused; Epp 475:1–14, 476:12–33

[399] See lines 710–13 of this letter.

[400] Matthew; Ep 1255

[401] Gold florins, probably Rhenish (then worth 4s 11d gros Flemish each) or Florentine (worth 6s 8d gros). Possibly, however, Erasmus meant the new Burgundian-Hapsburg carolus florins, named in honour of Charles V (worth 3s 6d gros); but if so he would presumably have referred to them by that name. See CWE 8 350, Table B.

[402] See n195 above.

gave me no less pleasure than if he had counted out a thousand gold pieces. Many years ago I had dedicated Plutarch's essay *De discrimine adulatoris et amici* to the king of England, Henry VIII.[403] I reckon my debt to him as great as the offer he made me, had I been willing to accept it; he offered me a position far greater than I deserved.[404] Long afterwards, in any case, when I had forgotten that dedication, he sent me sixty angels[405] on a suggestion or, more truly, a reminder from John Colet. Later, I dedicated to him my paraphrase on Luke.[406] Ferdinand, the emperor Charles' brother, with characteristic generosity accepted my paraphrase on St John[407] with the greatest readiness, and with his letter[408] sent me an honorarium of one hundred florins,[409] which was the last thing I expected. If I consider the attitude of the king of France towards me, and reckon what he has been willing to do for me, there is scarcely any prince to whom I owe more; but to my Hilarius,[410] who delivered a book to him, he gave thirty crowns[411] in cash by way of journey-money, and except for good will I myself got nothing; nor was I in hopes of anything else. Briefly, out of my paraphrases I did not get a

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[403] See n51 above.

[404] Ep 296:120–7

[405] Epp 816:8–10, 834. Sixty angel-nobles (*angelatos sexaginta*), or £20 English sterling, then worth about £29 gros Flemish, and £183 tournois. See Epp 1295 n1, and n130 above.

[406] See lines 766–7 of this letter and Allen Ep 1381.

[407] Ep 1333

[408] Ep 1343

[409] *Florenos centum*, not specified as gold coins, but cf Allen Ep 1376:14–16 (*centum florenos aureos*). This sum in Florentine coins would then have been officially worth £33 6s 8d gros Flemish (£22 10s sterling, or £207 10s tournois); Rhenish gold florins would have been worth about £24 10s od gros Flemish.

[410] Hilarius Bertolph (Ep 1257 n10), who delivered the presentation copy of the paraphrase on Mark (Ep 1400) to King Francis

[411] Presumably French *écus à la couronne*, struck from 1474 at 23 1/8 carats with 3.275 grams fine gold, but not minted during the first part of Francis I's reign, from 1515 to 1541. The only French gold coin then issued was the slightly heavier *écu au soleil* (originally also 23 1/8 carats, with 3.369 grams fine gold), whose obverse also contained a shield and crown, surmounted with a sun. In November 1516, both gold coins were raised in value in relation to the silver coinage: the *écu à la couronne* from 35s tournois to 39s, the *écu au soleil* from 36s 3d to 40s t; and in 1519 (May and July), the latter was slightly reduced in fineness and weight (23 carats, 3.300 grams fine gold), though not quite to the level of the *couronne*. Both gold *écus* then remained unchanged in value until March 1533, when their values were raised to 43s 6d and 45s t, respectively. At the time of this letter (1523), the official exchange rate for the *écu au soleil* was 76d gros Flemish in the Low Countries and 52d sterling in England; for the *écu à la couronne*, unofficially about 74d gros in the Low Countries and 50d sterling in

halfpenny, except from Ferdinand and Pope Clement. I had almost forgotten Ferdinand's father, Philip;[412] he once gave me fifty philippics[413] in cash when I showed him my *Panegyricus*.[414] The others gave me either nothing or a sum too small to be worth remembering; I speak only of those to whom I have dedicated my work.

Now suppose a man surveyed the stately row of names and titles, and believed me to resemble most other men, would he not suspect that my dedications must have made me as rich as Midas? I do not recall this because I have any complaints of the generosity of princes. I reckon any profit that accrues to humane studies as though it were money in my own purse; it is for their sake that I have wooed the favour of princes. And indeed, that there was nothing sordid in the way I wooed their generosity is clear from this if nothing else, that so often it has been quite hard work to be able to refuse their generosity towards me personally without hurting their feelings. My annual income is fixed at a little more than four hundred gold florins.[415] This fortune is unequal, I confess, to the expenses demanded by my age and state of health, by the assistance which my work must have in the way of servants and transcribers, by my keeping a horse, by my constant journeys, and by a spirit (to give it no other name) that will not tolerate meanness and squalor, that abhors bills unpaid, services unrequited, and friends neglected in their distress. And so I have friends who make good the shortfall in my income by their generosity, not so much giving me presents as forcing me to take them. What they give me, they say they spend, not on Erasmus, but on the cause of learning in general. They are men of such a position in the world that their fortunes do not feel this loss, and of such noble mind that they do not expect their generosity to be made public or allow themselves to be thanked; and

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England, so that 30 'crowns' would have been worth about £9 5s gros Flemish, £6 5s sterling, and £60 tournois. See CWE 1 315, 342–3; CWE 8 350, Table B; Ep 1295 n1.

[412] See n170 above.

[413] Worth £10 8s 4d gros (1500–21), and about £65 12s 6d tournois (from 1516). The philippus or florin of St Philip, first issued by Archduke Philip, had been the chief gold coin of the Hapsburg Low Countries from 1496 to 1521; from 1500, it was struck with 2.19 grams fine gold (15 carats 11 grains) and a value of 50d gros Flemish. In February 1521, after Philip's son had become the Hapsburg emperor Charles V, this coin was superseded by the carolus florin (14 carats, with 1.70 grams fine gold), worth 40d, and raised to 42d gros in August 1521. See CWE 1 318, 336–9; CWE 8 349–50, Tables A and B; Ep 1295 n1.

[414] See lines 706–7 of this letter.

[415] *Quadringenti floreni aurei*; presumably, from the context, Florentine florins, worth about £133 6s 8d gros, £90 sterling, and £830 tournois. See Ep 1295 n1.

this makes it all the more unfair that their goodness should be unknown to posterity.

So much for the treasures I have accumulated by flying high in my dedications. The topic suggests that I should also throw a sop to certain trade rivals who get me a bad name among those who know no better for having reaped a generous harvest out of the munificence of Johann Froben[416] – a man of whom I think most highly, and for nothing more so than the zeal for promoting humane studies, in which he surpasses almost all other printers, and gets more reputation than profit for his pains. And I should at any rate have made no small gain out of him, had I accepted whatever he offered me; for he is most generous. As it is, he will himself bear me witness how small is the total I have let myself be forced to accept; nor would he have had even that much success, had he not explained that the money was put up by the partnership, so that the share which fell on him personally would be a very light burden. And yet, had he wished to do no more than pay for the work of my servants, he would have had to give me more than I received. Nor did I allow my meals at his table to cost me nothing. I lived in his house nearly ten months,[417] and for this I forced him to accept 150 gold florins,[418] against great reluctance; for he would rather have paid me as much again, but I forced him. And that no one may suppose me dependent on Froben's generosity, Froben himself can bear witness – for he received a good part of it in his own hands on my behalf in Frankfurt – that the sum of money, part of which I brought here with me two years ago and part I received by way of remittance from Brabant, exceeded 1,900 florins.[419] Of which sum not much is now left. And yet all the time my annuity from the emperor is postponed; but postponed on terms that it will be ready for me at once on my return.[420] This is promised in a letter to me by the Lady Margaret, illustrious aunt of the emperor Charles, to whom the emperor himself had lately written from Spain,[421] giving instructions for my annuity

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[416] Otto Brunfels (Allen Ep 1405) had made this charge in his *Responsio ad Erasmi Spongiam* (Böcking II 343:3–5). Cf n285 above and Allen Ep 1459:52–3.

[417] See Ep 1289 n14.

[418] Possibly Florentine florins, but, since Erasmus is discussing Froben's Basel residence, more likely Rhenish florins, and thus an amount then worth about £37 gros Flemish. But see n415 above.

[419] *Mille nongentos florenos aureos*. These were probably Florentine florins, then officially worth £633 6s 8d gros Flemish (£427 10s sterling, or £3,942 10s tournois); if they were Rhenish gold florins, they were worth only about £465 gros. See Ep 1295 n1.

[420] See Ep 1273 n4 and Allen Ep 1380 introduction.

[421] Ep 1380

to be paid out of due turn, the annuities due in respect of all other offices being suspended on account of the burdens of the war. And so anyone who is jealous of Froben had better challenge him in a contest of generosity, and I shall be on the winning side. At least there is no reason why anyone should grudge me his friendship. If thanks to him I can do learning some service, it is without harming anyone else or standing in his way as he races to be rich; nor have I any agreement with Froben, only good will mutual and unfettered, in which I shall never endure to come second, challenge me who will. I have presented my true account; it is reasonable that their criticisms should now cease. But this is the wretched constraint upon those of us who publish books and begin to act our play before the public: we must satisfy everyone, even the dregs.

Ennio, bishop of Veroli,[422] has written[423] to me to say that in your part of the world there is a man who promises unfailing remedies for the stone[424] and has such confidence in his art that he will take no payment unless he has driven away the disease. But who can he put up to guarantee that it will not return when it has been driven away? In any case, who can assure us that in expelling the disease he may not expel life itself at the same time? I do not think it safe to entrust this frail body to a physician whom I do not know. I have made a friend here, a young man named Jan Antonin of Košice,[425] a Hungarian by birth, of good education and open and most attractive manners, who besides other remedies has given me an astrological lion,[426] which I use to drink from. Whether things that smack of magic deserve any credit, I do not know; but at any rate for some days now the stone has given me less trouble, whether I owe this to a change of wine, to other remedies, or to my lion. I have not forgotten the old proverb 'Send for a young barber, but

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[422] Ennio Filonardi (Ep 1282)

[423] Letter not extant

[424] See Ep 1267 n5.

[425] Antonin (c 1499–c 1549), from Kassa in North Hungary (now Košice in Czechoslovakia), studied medicine at Padua. In July 1524 he visited Basel and was welcomed into the circle of Erasmus, for whom he performed the medical services indicated here (cf AK Ep 2149:17–24 and Allen Epp 1512:44–6, 1564:35–7). Though officially invited to settle and practice in Basel, Antonin left in November 1524, returning first to Hungary and then in 1525 settling in Cracow, where he became one of the most active protagonists of Erasmianism in Poland, winning Erasmus new patrons and maintaining friendly relations with him. Very few of the letters that they exchanged have survived. In 1526 Erasmus dedicated some translations of Galen to Antonin (Ep 1698).

[426] The *Leo astrologicus* was a coin minted in Padua in 1523 which, when dipped in wine, was believed to have magical properties as a remedy against gallstones.

an old physician';[427] but in my Antonin I find nothing young except his appearance – his character and scholarship have their own gray hairs, although he is not more than twenty-five, and he is a good Latin and Greek scholar and so attentive to me that were he my own son he could not take more trouble.°

Mind you look after yourself properly, my most excellent Botzheim, with all your company, your Graces and your Muses; and long and happily may you be spared to live among them. Give my particular greetings to that modest scholar Michael Hummelberg,[428] and at the same time to Johann Wanner,[429] your public preacher, and to those brethren born for virtue and piety, Ambrosius and Thomas Blarer,[430] and to the man to whom after the wine of Burgundy I owe my heaviest debt, Johann Menlishofer the physician,[431] a man in my opinion as civilized as he is learned. As for your most honoured bishop,[432] do not cease to commend me to him, and I shall not cease to pray that all may go well with him, and all may be his that his outstanding character deserves.

Basel, 30 January 1523

1342 / To Marcus Laurinus — Basel, 1 February 1523

The addressee, Marcus Laurinus (1488–1546), was the second son of Hieronymus Lauwerijns, squire of Watervliet and treasurer to Philip the Handsome (Ep 1341A n170). Erasmus had met Marcus and his brothers in Bologna in 1506 (Ep 201). Marcus, who remained an intimate friend and correspondent of Erasmus for many years, became canon of St Donatian's at Bruges in 1512 and dean in 1519.

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[427] Not in the *Adagia*, but see *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* 3rd ed (Oxford 1970) 927.

[428] Ep 1253 n6

[429] Ep 1335 n5

[430] Ambrosius and Thomas Blarer (or Blaurer) were sons of a town councillor of Constance. Thomas (d 1567) studied at Freiburg and (from 1520) at Wittenberg, whence he sent works of Luther and Melanchthon to Ambrosius (1492–1564), who was a Benedictine monk at Alpirsbach in the Black Forest. In the summer of 1522, Ambrosius abandoned the monastery to become the theological leader of the Reformation in Constance, to which he imparted a decidedly Zwinglian flavour. In 1523 Thomas returned to Constance to pursue a civic career. Erasmus probably met Ambrosius in the autumn of 1522 during his visit to Constance. In November 1523 he received a friendly letter from Thomas (Ep 1396).

[431] Ep 1335 n10

[432] Hugo von Hohenlandenberg (d 1532)

Erasmus himself counted this letter among his major apologetic writings (Ep 1341A:1016–18). Almost half of it (from line 650) is devoted to a detailed explanation of his much misunderstood attitude toward Luther. Much of the other half describes and justifies Erasmus' similarly misunderstood wanderings and his unexpectedly prolonged residence in Basel. The letter was published with the first edition of the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A introduction) but omitted from the second. Beginning with the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529, it was published in all the major editions of his correspondence.

There are reasons, enumerated by Allen, for being suspicious of the date which Erasmus assigned to this letter. It seems unlikely, first of all, that Erasmus would have waited fourteen months before providing so intimate a friend as Laurinus with so lively and detailed an account of his journey to Basel in November 1521 (lines 98–242). Moreover, the references to the new pope succeeding Leo X (lines 631–2, 1000–4) and the brief echoes of Ep 1268 (lines 657–8, 1022–4) suggest a date somewhere in the period January–March 1522. On the other hand, the descriptions of Erasmus' visits to Sélestat and Constance in April and September 1522 (lines 333–8, 369–495), and certain references, such as that to the death of Hattstein in June 1522 (lines 206–7), could not have been written so early. Allen inferred from all this that Erasmus, wishing to publish an important letter clarifying his attitude toward Luther, combined it with an earlier letter, addressed to the same friend and full of vivid narrative, in order to produce a composition attractive to his reading public.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO MARCUS LAURINUS, DEAN OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF ST DONATIAN AT BRUGES, GREETING

I must say, you owe a great debt to our friend Hilarius,[1] who when you were quite dispirited by pitiless rumours,[2] as you say in your letter,[3] suddenly gave you back your spirits. But that there should be people who spread rumours of this sort without a shadow of truth in them ought to surprise no one, for this reason if no other, that it is no longer new, especially since the world feeds so many idlers whose only object (and it comes easy to them, and is all they have left) is to pierce with tongues dipped in poison those who do their best to serve the cause of public enlightenment and the Christian

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1342

[1] Bertholf (Ep 1257 n10)

[2] See lines 251–5, 564–7, 574–6, 590–1. See also Ep 1331 n16. According to Allen, who cites *Collectanea van Gerardus Geldenhauer Noviomagus* ed J. Prinsen (Amsterdam 1901) 74, Bertholf's arrival at Bruges with this letter dispelled a rumour of Erasmus' death.

[3] Not extant

religion, that in this way at least they may cause temporary anguish to the spirits of those who rejoice in public progress and therefore support the men who devote their activities to the public good. What does surprise me is that people should be disturbed by rumours of this kind, especially when they have so often learned from experience how vain the outcome has shown them to be. But it ought not to seem surprising if men who have never known even in a dream what it means to be ashamed of oneself dare to tell lies about one who is so far away, when against their nearest neighbour they are wont to coin new fables all the time. There, I have produced a blank verse by accident![4] I think the subject deserved an iambic line, with some teeth in it.

I have spent so many years in Louvain.[5] Whenever I betook myself to Brussels or Mechelen, giving a good ten days notice of my departure before I left, these men, who have no sense of shame, used to put it about that I had run away. Then when I retired into the country for the sake of my health to Anderlecht,[6] which is a populous place and quite close to Brussels, where the emperor's palace is, though I rode into the city almost daily and returned from time to time to Louvain too, you may be sure they said I was taking cover. And often during the same period, so they said, I was ill of an untreatable fever in Louvain, and near Brussels I had fallen from my horse and nearly died of an apoplexy; though for many years, thanks be to Christ, I had not been in better health than I was at that time.[7] But within seven years I can't tell you how often they had buried me or brought me to death's door or laid me low with every kind of misfortune.

Could any Phalaris or Mezentius do worse?[8] Is it not enough to have killed my poor self once, but they must constantly torment me with unending troubles and snuff me out in repeated ruin? Nor can they sate their cruel appetites meanwhile with all these tortures and these endless deaths. What has become all this while of those words of the apostle John, 'Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer?'[9] They make it pretty clear, I think, what they will do if they safely can, by killing me so often with their

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[4] The last four words of the previous sentence (*novas subinde comminisci fabulas*) form an iambic senarius. Iambics were traditionally the metre for invective.

[5] 1502–4, 1517–21

[6] In the summer of 1521; see Ep 1271 n31.

[7] Erasmus enjoyed better health at Anderlecht than he had for years; Epp 1208:1–2, 1223, 1238:12–15, and Allen 1518:20–4.

[8] Phalaris, tyrant of Agrigentum in Sicily from c 570 to 554 BC, and Mezentius, king of the Tyrrheian Caere, later slain by Aeneas. Both were famous for their cruelty.

[9] 1 John 3:15

tongues because they cannot use cold steel. And yet the day cannot be far distant when it will be true to say 'Erasmus is no more.' Of all the mischances that may befall mankind, there is not one that I may not expect. Indeed it is surprising that this poor body, feeble enough in itself, and now weaker still from the onset of old age, should stand up to so much sickness, so much misfortune, so much toil. And this I think I owe to their imprecations and their vows, such being God's will, that they must wait for the fruition of their cruel pleasure. Even now, when they have at last polished me off in these horrible ways, they savagely attack my books, just as though they were my beloved children, so that if I live again, as it were, in them – if I survive, rather – I may die an even more cruel death. How often they have damned these, branded with their theta,[10] how often consigned them to avenging flames!

If I failed to attend the Diet of Worms or, as the learned have started calling it, Berbethomagum,[11] to which I had indeed been invited, the reason partly was that I did not wish to become involved with the Luther business, which was then in a highly critical stage; in part because I could easily guess that in such a gathering of princes and such a hotbed of humanity of every sort, there would certainly be plague,[12] for Cologne had not been free of that scourge when the emperor first lived there. After the death of the prince of Chièvres[13] certain people I could name tried to bring some sort of charge against me before the emperor;[14] but so outrageously that they convinced no honourable and intelligent person. I myself was warned in letters from my friends,[15] and by writing immediately to the chief figures at court[16] scattered the whole nonsense so successfully that they all sent me answers which

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[10] That is, condemned; see *Adagia* I v 56: *Theta praefigere.*

[11] 'Borbetomagum' is the correct form.

[12] The plague ravaged the imperial household during the Diet of Worms, carrying off Chièvres (Ep 532:30n), among others.

[13] Cf n16 below.

[14] The same incident is reported in the *Spongia* (ASD IX-1 150), where Erasmus identifies Aleandro (Ep 1256 n11) as the chief culprit, though there were surely others as well (see Ep 1195 introduction and Allen Ep 1482:11–13). The charge was that Erasmus was a supporter of Luther and the author of certain 'scandalous pamphlets.' See Ep 1195.

[15] One of these was Capito; Ep 1195 n1. None of the warning letters is extant.

[16] Of the letters which Erasmus sent to court, the only one extant is Ep 1195, addressed to Luigi Marliano (d 1521), physician and councillor to Charles V and bishop of Tuy. If, as one assumes, all the other letters, including that to Aleandro, were written at the same time as Ep 1195 (25 March 1521), then Erasmus was mistaken in remembering (lines 61–2) that the move against him at court took place after the death of Chièvres, which occurred on 28 May.

were as cordial as they were complimentary. Among them[17] were that most distinguished man Mercurio Gattinara, his Imperial Majesty's high chancellor, the cardinal of Sion, Marliano, bishop of Tuy, Girolamo Aleandro, who was at that time apostolic nuncio – for others I purposely do not name. Only the bishop of Liège[18] kept my messenger waiting for several days, and at length being prevented by press of business sent me merely a verbal reply.

On the emperor's return to Brussels[19] scarcely a day passed when I did not ride through the market-place and past the court, and I was often at court myself, a thing not very habitual with me; in fact I lived almost more in Brussels than at Anderlecht. Every day I was greeting bishops, though normally I do not seek anything from such social duties; I dined with the cardinal;[20] I had a talk with both nuncios;[21] I called on the envoys, and they in turn came to see me at Anderlecht. Never in my life was I less concealed, never lived more openly in the eyes of all men. And yet all this time there were some of those voluble rascals who had described me as lying concealed somewhere in Germany. Nor did I discover this fact before I had retired here.

Again, when the emperor was living in Bruges,[22] together with the king of Denmark,[23] and his eminence Thomas, the cardinal of York,[24] was there at the time as envoy representing the English king, had I merely confined myself to your house, you can say of your own knowledge what a secret life I should have led, while you received everyone, or at least all the chief figures at court, constantly at your table; and I sat among them and all, I think, were pleased to see me there. As it is, think of the times I dined out or supped with the nobility, and even with the king of Denmark, who actually wished he could enjoy my society every day. Think how I rode out frequently everywhere, and in your company. Was there any gathering of magnates at which I was not present? – in the emperor's court one day,

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[17] Of the four answers listed here, two survive: Epp 1197 from Gattinara (Ep 1150) and 1198 from Marliano (see the preceding note). Those from Aleandro and Cardinal Schiner (Ep 1295) were presumably written at about the same time, ie, early April 1521. According to the account in the *Spongia* (n14 above), Aleandro's reply was conciliatory. Lines 78 and 120–5 below indicate that civil relations were temporarily restored.

[18] Erard de la Marck (Ep 1268 n9)

[19] 14 June 1521; Gachard II 30

[20] Schiner (Ep 1295)

[21] Aleandro and Caracciolo (Ep 1263 n1)

[22] In August 1521; LP III 1458, Ep 1223 introduction

[23] Ep 1263 n11

[24] Wolsey

another in the household of the cardinal of York, and so on and so forth, even though I was often invited and did not go. For I am a home-keeper by nature, and that also is the manner of life demanded by my work.

And the way in which I then lay hidden is matched by the secrecy of my departure later on. For six long months I had been preparing for my journey to Basel,[25] and that too in the sight of all men; for this was the reason why the treasurer[26] actually paid me my imperial annuity[27] in cash before the due date, because I told him I had to go to Basel. Nor was there any secrecy about the cause, which was of course the same that had made me pay so many earlier visits to Basel, before I had any reason to fear these champions. The first volume of my New Testament had been printed off,[28] and there remained the annotations. I wanted to be there for them, not only that the published text might be more correct but to be able little by little, as occasion arose, to make changes or additions. For in this sort of work the author finds his toil 'in ceaseless round returns, unsated ever.'[29] I hoped however to finish my work in this final edition, which was the third. Do you find this a frivolous excuse? Let it seem so, if you please, but only to those potbellies,[30] who would not hesitate all the same to skip off all the way to Basel on foot for the sake of a good dinner. I at least found the reason no less acceptable than the king of France found his duchy of Milan.[31]

I was already booted and spurred, and there was no obstacle except the risks of travel. I waited therefore for a safe escort. Meanwhile money was to be got together from various places, and for this purpose I spent six days actually in Louvain, in my usual concealment, of course, there too, in an inn where nobody ever stays, so much so that frequently they cannot find room for one. The sign of this populous hostelry is the Wild Man.[32] By pure luck Girolamo Aleandro was there at that moment, and I spent a pleasant time in his company, sometimes prolonging the conversation on literary topics until

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[25] Cf Ep 1242 introduction.
[26] Ruffault (Ep 1287 n10)
[27] Ep 1273 n4
[28] The text of the third edition was sent to Froben at Basel sometime before 27 May 1521; Ep 1206:72–3, and cf Ep 1174 n6. Text and annotations were published in February 1522.
[29] Cf Virgil *Georgics* 2.401.
[30] The Louvain theologians; cf Ep 1166:15–16.
[31] Francis I won Milan at the battle of Marignano in 1515, lost it to Charles V in 1521–2, took it again in 1524, and then lost it for good at the battle of Pavia the next year.
[32] Ie, the *Homme Sauvage*, apparently the principal inn in Louvain at the time; cf Allen Ep 1244:3n.

midnight. We had agreed that if we had the chance of a safe journey we should set off together. When I returned there a few days later, I found Aleandro still mobilizing for departure, just as I was. In Brussels I had learned that the general Franz von Sickingen[33] was to be at Tienen the following day; at that time he was on excellent terms with the emperor, but what their relations are now, I do not know.[34]

That day was my birthday,[35] and also that of Sts Simon and Jude, and something happened appropriate to my birthday, by which I mean part of my fate. A certain Dominican,[36] I think the man who wrote notes on my *Moria*, had preached in the Sint Pieterskerk at seven o'clock. He is a cocksure fellow with a high opinion of himself – the type, you would say, of Phormio[37] in the play. He seemed to be not so much speaking from the sacred pulpit as thumping a tub. For a solid hour almost he held forth against me personally, joining in Luther's name from time to time, obviously to make his public suspect that there was much contact between him and me; but what particularly unleashed his ire was, as he said, my intention to correct the works of Augustine[38] as well, of which he said I understood nothing. He promised to preach at greater length on the same subject after dinner, for that is when inspiring tankards make these gentry more eloquent. Knowing nothing of this, when I went to church to attend high mass, I was greeted by Maquet,[39] a pleasant person and a former

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[33] Franz von Sickingen (1481–1523), a free imperial knight and soldier of fortune whose intelligence, military skill, income from the mines on his estates, and the scale of his activities as a 'robber baron' set him apart from the other members of the knightly class. Along with his fellow knight and friend, Ulrich von Hutten, Sickingen was an early and sincere, if violent and uncomprehending, supporter of Luther; see Ep 1308 n7. Here and in line 167 Erasmus refers to Sickingen as *dux* (duke), which must, under the circumstances, be construed as an indication of military leadership rather than of princely rank. To avoid confusion, we have translated *dux* as 'general.'

[34] In July 1521 Sickingen entered the emperor's service in the war against France, but did poorly and fell into disfavour, losing his army and a great deal of money in the process. In the attempt to recoup his fortunes, to strike a blow for the Reformation, and to create the territorial basis for his elevation to princely rank, he launched an invasion of the archbishopric of Trier in August 1522. This led to his outlawry in October and to his defeat and death in May 1523.

[35] Born during the night of 27–8 October, Erasmus celebrated the twenty-eighth, the feast of Sts Simon and Jude. See Allen I, appendix 2, page 578.

[36] Laurens Laurensen; see Ep 1166 n6.

[37] See Ep 1341A n76.

[38] Ep 1309 introduction

[39] Jean Maquet (d 1535) of Binche in Hainault, since 1519 *syndicus* (legal agent) of the university, and before that twice *promotor* (a disciplinary official)

student of that university. He asked what had happened to make me be in church so early, at seven o'clock in fact, and contrary to my usual habits. 'What do you mean, early?' I said. 'Yes,' he says, 'you were there in the harangue.' I laughed, and gathered (which was no surprise to me) that some noisy fellow had been prating to the congregation. He was a candidate for the doctorate in theology, and in this way was giving a sample of his quality, to show that he would not be unworthy of that honourable estate.

I went home and ate a brief dinner, intending soon to be on horseback, for I had determined to leave at two o'clock. I found Aleandro pacing up and down. I had often told him at length about the impudence of this sort of noisy rascals, but he could never believe what I said. I advised him therefore, if he wished to test my reliability, to send one of his people to the Dominican church at one o'clock, when the last act of the ancient comedy was due to be presented. He sent one of them to the Ploughboy,[40] the biggest fool of all the theologians Louvain has had for fifty years; he's a real Coroebus.[41] Aleandro told him formally (I quote almost verbatim) not to rant against any man's reputation but to preach the gospel; and to frighten him off more effectually brought in the authority of the supreme pontiff – for which these men have a wonderful respect whenever it suits their book. I suborned some people to listen, because I had to be off, as my companions were all ready. They wrote me a full account afterwards, and said the man complained that he was forbidden by certain persons to give free rein to his inspiration.

When I reached Tienen, Franz the general was not there, nor was he expected; but there was a large body of troops, some infantry, some cavalry, some of the middle sort, who were removing their booty in carts together with lame and wounded who had been careless on the battlefield. I had these men as travelling-companions as far as Speyer; there I crossed the Rhine and left them on my left. Being numerous, they secured me thus far a very safe journey.

I had decided to incur the least possible expense on my way. It is a German custom for local societies to meet in order to pay one their respects, and nothing can be more enjoyable when one has the leisure; but when one is hurried and exhausted and beset by the problems of travel, nothing is less to the point. In the mean time, while we are exchanging greetings, the horses are neglected, and pick up some disease or die of thirst. After the

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[40] Identified by Allen as Vincentius Theoderici (Ep 1196), but the reference to Aleandro's rebuke in lines 159–62 makes Laurensen (n36 above) the more likely candidate.

[41] See Ep 1341A n275.

town of Düren therefore I went straight through Sickingen, leaving Cologne on my left. That day we sat our horses, with no dinner, for nine solid hours, riding steadily all the time, because the last part of the journey was longer than we expected, and none too safe, as it wound through mountains and hills.

Next day we got to Koblenz about ten o'clock. There too I longed to get away without a word, but somehow that excellent man Matthias,[42] the official of that city, who is entirely devoted to good literature and the good life, got to know of it. As I had guessed would happen, he carried me off to his house willy-nilly, and his friends came flocking in. There I learned for the first time, and it was a very great surprise to me, that there were people in Germany who feared that something might happen to me.[43] But I relieved them of this baseless fear, actually laughed them out of it. They also told me that the bishop[44] much wanted to meet me – in Cologne too he had invited me to dinner,[45] but I used the pestilent and unseasonable weather as an excuse, thinking it more important of course to mind my own health than to comply with great men's wishes – but at this time he was away from home. Furthermore, since it was clear that the friends who wished to greet me would not allow me to detach myself that day, in order not to let a whole day be lost without a line[46] I wrote several letters after dinner to various friends for dispatch by that kindest of men, Karl Harst,[47] who had courteously accompanied me thus far.

Before reaching Mainz I learned on the way that the cardinal of Mainz was not at home;[48] so that left only Capito, whom I summoned for a talk. The moment I heard that he too was away, I made ready to leave, and was offered some of his household, armed, to go with me by that excellent young man Marquard von Hattstein, a canon of Mainz cathedral, who has recently died,[49] though in every way he richly deserved a long life. When I refused, since such a thing often actually attracts the highwaymen, he gave me his personal servant as a companion.

At Worms, while dinner was preparing, I summoned Hermannus

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[42] Matthias von Saarburg (Ep 867:64n)

[43] Presumably because of his connections with Reuchlin and Luther

[44] Richard von Greiffenklau, archbishop of Trier (d 1531)

[45] In November 1520; see Epp 1155–60 and Allen Ep 1512:18–20.

[46] Cf *Adagia* I iv 12.

[47] Ep 1215

[48] Archbishop Albert (Ep 661) and Capito (Ep 1290) were in Halle in November 1521; see Ep 1241 introduction.

[49] Hattstein, kinsman of Hutten and canon at Mainz (cf Ep 1109 n8), died on 13 June 1522, aged nearly thirty-three.

Buschius,[50] a man of more than average learning and a very old friend of mine, for a talk. While a prolonged and fruitless search was failing to find him, I sat too long in a room with a stove and suffered severely;[51] for though up to now I had always been in capital health, at this point I began to feel sick, more from the stink than from the heat – so difficult do I find it to live with German stoves, though I get on famously with the Germans themselves. I should think them much blessed with a thing in many ways so convenient, were I allowed to enjoy it with them. But this first physical setback was shaken off by the hard exercise of riding. We flew to Speyer rather than rode, and I had horses of the true Pegasus blood, who are eating their master out of house and home even now.

When we arrived at Speyer – and our arrival was very late – I went straight with my horses to the house of Thomas Truchsess,[52] the dean of the cathedral, either because he had often written and told me to do so, or since I knew that all the inns on every side were stuffed full with soldiers, who usually show more ferocity in the inn than on the battlefield, as a hero should. When I got there, I found some of the canons supping with him, and joined them at table. There too the stove was very hot, though there was an absence of stink. Immediately the same physical affliction returned that was already only too familiar. I therefore resolved to avoid this favourite German device entirely. After two days there I recovered my health, and got to Strasbourg. Here too I had decided not to stay; but Jakob Spiegel,[53] the emperor's secretary, a good scholar and a man of spotless character, whom I dared not fail to greet in passing, made my presence known to the society,[54] which had a new recruit in Lucas Bathodius,[55] who has a more passionate love of these things than any of them. I gave them one day, and then a second. From there I proceeded to Sélestat, escorted by several of them; among whom was Bartholomaeus Latomus of Trier,[56] a man unusually lively in both character and brain, who was master of a college of philosophy in Freiburg. From there some of the society[57] again gave me their company

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[50] See Epp 1291 n4.
[51] See Ep 1258 n18.
[52] See Ep 355:50n.
[53] See Ep 1323 introduction.
[54] See Epp 302 and 867:22–28.
[55] See Ep 883:15n.
[56] See Ep 1252 n3.
[57] Ie, the literary society of Sélestat, whose founder and focal member was Jakob Wimpfeling; see Ep 323 introduction. For other members of the society, see BRE Ep 163 (page 221) and CEBR III 449.

as a compliment as far as Colmar, among them Beatus Rhenanus, who escorted me next day[58] as far as Basel.

Why need I at this point remind you, my dear Laurinus, of Thraso,[59] by recounting what warm congratulations I received on my return from that excellent and most saintly old man the bishop of Basel,[60] who even now sends me presents and letters from time to time as evidence of his feelings towards me, and from the authorities of this city and all the other leading figures in the church and in higher education? And they would have displayed their enthusiasm at even greater length, did I not always make it clear from the outset that such formalities have absolutely no attractions for me. And my presence was so far from escaping notice in Germany that according to the rumours which preceded me I had been there for several days before my arrival. Meanwhile these worthless fellows were triumphantly saying that I had decamped to Wittenberg. They really stick at nothing!

All this time in Basel my health was pretty good, until the rooms began to get cold. In any case, when I saw clearly that other people already found the cold unbearable, I allowed them two or three times to light up in moderation. But this unselfishness cost me dear: in no time I caught a pestilent cold. The cold was followed by an attack of the stone,[61] and the trouble recurred so frequently that no day passed without my either conceiving or being in labour or bringing to birth or enduring postnatal convalescence, like women in childbed. Meanwhile my appetite collapsed so completely that no remedy could restore it. Fasting is by nature fatal to me; and during the birth-pangs of the stone, which often lasted two days, food is the last thing one can face. As a result, though the pain was worse than any form of death, yet I was in no less danger from the complete loss of appetite. In short, I was in such straits that even Nicolaas Baechem[62] would have been satisfied.

But in the mean time, though I was in great trouble of body, my spirit was unbroken and did not give in. Besides many other things I finished my annotations on the New Testament. I set about a paraphrase on Matthew, and finished it within about two months; when finished I sent it to the emperor,[63] and it was very well received by the whole court. Jean Glapion[64]

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[58] 15 November; see Ep 1242 introduction.

[59] The braggart soldier in Terence's *Eunuchus*

[60] Christoph von Utenheim (Ep 1332)

[61] See Ep 1267 n5.

[62] Ep 1254 n6

[63] Ep 1255

[64] Ep 1275

showed it in his chapel in the presence of several court prelates, among whom was the bishop of Palencia;[65] and he gave a most fair and friendly report on my work which recommended it forcibly to the emperor.[66] His Majesty at once recognized the Erasmus who had long ago dedicated the *Panegyricus* to his father Philip[67] and to himself the previous book, *Institutio principis christiani*,[68] and expressed his gratitude for the gift in a letter[69] which was as kind as it was complimentary. Most obliging letters[70] to the same effect arrived from many others, but particularly from Glapion himself, the bishop of Palencia, the chancellor Mercurino, Joris van Halewijn, Jean de Carondelet, archbishop of Palermo, Antoon Sucket, one of the councillors who is specially influential, Maximilian, the most distinguished of the secretaries.[71] When most people's pensions were either terminated or reduced, they promised that mine would be untouched and paid in full, and told me to hope in future for even greater evidence of the emperor's bounty. Indeed his Majesty in person, when dining not long afterwards with the king of England, went out of his way to speak highly of me,[72] and made it quite clear what his feelings towards me were. This I learned for certain from those who were in attendance at table.

I am sure you began to smile long ago at my showing off like this, but I am driven to it by the impudence of those who accuse me falsely. Even so, I tell rather less than the truth, so far am I from inventing any additions; for you will have noticed, no doubt, how little appetite I have for these petty distinctions. But they criticize me all this time for having stayed so long in Basel and for not putting in an appearance before the emperor's departure,[73] however often my friends wrote and told me to come.[74] On this point, my

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[65] Mota (Ep 1273)

[66] See Ep 1269.

[67] See Ep 179.

[68] See Ep 393.

[69] Ep 1270

[70] For all the letters mentioned here, save the last, see Epp 1299:41–6, 1300:63–9, 1331:12–19.

[71] Maximilianus Transsilvanus (Transsylvanus), d 1538, secretary to the imperial chancellery under Maximilian I and Charles V. Erasmus apparently met him at court in 1521. Transsilvanus made repeated attempts to secure the payment of Erasmus' imperial annuity and also defended him in his conflicts with conservative theologians, especially those at Louvain. See Allen Ep 1553 introduction.

[72] Cf Ep 1302:64–6.

[73] See Ep 1273 introduction for Erasmus' unsuccessful attempt to return to Brabant in April 1522.

[74] Cf Ep 1269:12–14.

most excellent Marcus, I could wish for my own sake that my case were less strong than it is. In the emperor's circle there was no question at issue except how to make the position which had fallen to my lot more permanent or more distinguished; and personally I was completely satisfied with what I had already, and in Basel was by no means unemployed – the facts speak for themselves. Suppose I had attached more importance to this business, which was of the nature of a service to the public, than to my personal advantage, should I be taken to task for this? I was invited to accept very high honours (so Glapion assured me in more than one letter), and there was so much evidence to convince me of the emperor's good will – and it was fear, if you please, that kept me away! Had any such risks been displayed before these gentry who are dead to the world, how they would have come scampering up with winged feet and open mouths!

As for me, if I feared anything in all this, it was simply that the task of doing battle with Luther's party might be entrusted to me by a personage to whom it would have been unlawful to say no – not that I am in favour of this movement of rebellion, for nature has implanted in me such an abhorrence of all strife that, if I had to undertake a lawsuit to secure great estates, I would rather abandon the property than pursue my legal rights. I am in very truth the vine and fig-tree of the parable in Judges,[75] which were invited by a delegation from all the trees to reign over them and fight their battles and replied that they could not leave the sweetness of their nature and plunge into the confusion of war. The emperor had been persuaded by men in high place, but wrongly, that I was above all the ideal person to undertake this task, though no one less suitable could have been chosen. I saw many men on all sides girding on their armour for this affair; I recognized how unequal I was myself to such a responsibility, even had I been fitted by nature for such unpleasant conflicts; I saw much else to dissuade me, on which I think it best now to hold my peace.

And yet even these many considerations would not have deterred me from returning, had not that vicious tyrant held me bound in chains. 'What tyrant?' you will say; 'there are no tyrants in Switzerland.' I mean that second Phalaris,[76] the stone;[77] and would that I could play the tyrannicide at its expense! Even this however I ignored, and had got out as far as Sélestat;[78] but I was in such a state from the journey that I had first to nurse my physical weakness and reduce my fever by two days at Breisach with Heinrich

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[75] Judg 9:8–15
[76] See n8 above.
[77] See Ep 1267 n5.
[78] See Ep 1273 introduction.

Gallinarius,[79] their parish priest, and then spend four days recovering with Beatus,[80] the most open-hearted of all my friends, and thus managed to get back to Basel, but only after staying again with Gallinarius to recover. Meantime however I had resigned myself, if I should hear that Charles' stay among us would be prolonged, to patch up my strength and make another attempt at the journey. When I heard from the servant whom I had sent on ahead for the purpose the definite date on which the emperor had decided to set sail, it was the first of May, which was then imminent. Having lost all hope of seeing him, I remained at Basel for some months, but gave myself by no means an easy time.

Meanwhile I was invited to Rome in letters from learned men who were not only numerous but such as I could safely trust, particularly from the cardinal of Sion,[81] who pursued this idea frequently by way of third parties and twice in warmhearted and enthusiastic letters from himself, in which, over and above all the support and all the expectations, he promised me on his own account five hundred ducats a year,[82] besides provision for my journey by no means ungenerous. I was urged to the same course in a most kind letter from that well-known figure Silvester Prierias.[83] Consequently I actually began to think of going to Rome, if only my domestic tyrant[84] should issue me a passport. And there were many things besides to make Rome attractive – the abundance of very good books and very good scholars; all those old friends, among whom were Richard Pace,[85] who was then living there, and Paolo Bombace[86] and Johannes Fabri[87] and Georg Sauermann,[88] provost of Wrocław, a young man who is an accomplished

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[79] An example of Erasmus' frequent inaccuracy with first names. Gallinarius' name was Johannes; see Ep 1307 introduction.

[80] Ep 327

[81] See Ep 1299 n9.

[82] See Ep 1299:49 and Ep 1295 n1.

[83] Ep 872:19n. Prierias' letter is not extant.

[84] See lines 330–3 of this letter.

[85] See Ep 211:53n. Pace had been sent to Rome to work for the election of Wolsey to the papacy. He arrived on 27 January 1522 and by 4 August had retired to North Italy; LP III 1884, 1995, 2211, 2420. See also Ep 1294:15, and Allen Ep 1360:11.

[86] See Ep 1260 n43.

[87] See Epp 1260 n22, 1324 n13.

[88] Georg Sauermann (1492?–1527) of Wrocław studied law at Bologna, where he was rector of the university in 1513–14. In 1519 he entered the service of Leo X, who in 1520 sent him to greet Charles V in Spain, where he entered the emperor's service. Sauermann accompanied Charles back to the Netherlands, where his friendship with Erasmus presumably began. In the autumn of 1520

scholar and destined to do great things, and Herman[89] of Friesland, long outstanding among the younger men and likely to make a name among the learned; and all those new friends, among them Corycius,[90] most open-hearted of men, and Landau,[91] who will one day be a well-known author unless my forecast quite misleads me. I pass over for the moment all those cardinals, of whom the greater part are my keen supporters, as I hear from my friends' letters – and some of them have recorded their own feelings for me in letters from themselves. If anyone wonders whether I can be trusted, I can produce the letters, which will show that this is an understatement.

And so, although dissuaded by all my friends, I went to Constance,[92] two of them offering to come with me, Heinrich Eppendorf,[93] who besides his lineage and his learning is a most charming person, and Beatus Rhenanus. We were all hospitably received by that distinguished man Johann von Botzheim Abstemius,[94] one of the canons, who is as courteous and as open-hearted as any man I ever met, born as one might say for the Muses and the Graces. The house he lives in you would take to be a real home of the Muses; no part of it but displays something in the way of polish and elegance, no part without a voice – all speaks in paintings that attract and retain the attention. In his summer hall, which (so he tells me) he had fitted up for my benefit, nearest to the table stood Paul teaching the people; on the other wall was Christ seated on the mount and teaching his disciples, then the apostles setting off over the hills to preach the gospel. Next to the fireplace stood the priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, conspiring with the elders against the gospel, which was then raising its head. In another place were the nine sisters of Apollo singing, elsewhere the naked Graces, a symbol of simple good will and friendship without feigning. But why go on trying to describe his whole house in a letter, when all the elegance and

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Sauermann returned to Rome as imperial proctor at the papal court and c 1521 became provost of the cathedral in Wrocław. Among his works is the *De religione ac communi concordia* (1524), a spirited defence of the church against schism. He died of injuries received during the sack of Rome. None of his correspondence with Erasmus survives.

[89] See Ep 903:14n.

[90] Johannes Corycius of Luxembourg (d 1527), cleric and jurist at the curia since at least 1497. His house near Trajan's forum became the favourite resort of the poets of the Roman Academy. Erasmus probably met him in Rome in 1509. Like Sauermann (n88 above), he was badly handled during the sack of Rome and died shortly thereafter. No correspondence with Erasmus survives.

[91] Jakob Ziegler (Ep 1260)

[92] See Ep 1316 introduction.

[93] Ep 1283 n4

[94] Ep 1285

charm of it one could scarcely survey in ten days? And in the whole house, exquisite as it is in every part, there is nothing more exquisite than our host himself. He keeps the Muses and the Graces more in his heart than in his pictures; they are more at home in his character than on his walls.

The moment of my arrival I had asked my host to invite no one to dinner, for by nature I enjoy a small party, and at that time I was so poorly that I was more likely to be a burden to others than to be able to recover my spirits in plenty of company. To begin with, I was weary after my journey, and then I was as far gone in pregnancy as any old sow, and very close moreover to giving birth, for we can actually feel that coming on, just as pregnant women do. It was a sorry business, all this precaution! It so happened that Hugo, bishop of Constance,[95] was in town at the time, a man of heroic physical stature, singular grace of manner, straightforward and free from all pretence, free from pride too – no warrior like most of the German bishops, but a real father in God. He heard at once of my arrival, and wished to invite me as a mark of esteem. Botzheim suggested, however, that he should have pity on my health, and promised to let him know when it would be convenient. In this matter the bishop deserves twofold credit for his courtesy. It was courteous to offer me hospitality, but still more courteous to put up with a refusal. Some men resent it and think they are spurned unless you fall in with all their suggestions even at some cost to yourself. He sent his steward, however, to bring me some partridges as a present and offer me anything that a bishop's house could provide; and I made continuous use of the prelate's generosity. Some days later I was brought to bed, but with more pain than ever before. I was very weak therefore after my birth-pangs, and in no state to be merry either for my own benefit or other people's; otherwise nothing was lacking to make one supremely happy. Immortal gods! what hospitality, what a host, what gentlemen! Everything so well found! The conversation, the reading, the music! Truly they were repasts and suppers of the gods! I would not envy the poets' gods their nectar and ambrosia, had my health only been a little more propitious.

The situation of the place itself was full of charm too. Constance is dominated by a wonderful great lake, which stretches both far and wide for many miles and at the same time loses none of its beauty. Its attractions are increased by the forest-clad hills prominent in all directions, some distant and some near at hand. For at that point, as though wearied by its rocky headlong passage through the Alps, the Rhine seems to have found an agreeable resting-place to recuperate in, through the middle of which it

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[95] Hugo von Hohenlandenberg (d 1532)

makes its gentle progress; at Constance it gathers again into its proper channel and therewith resumes its own name – though the lake as a whole has always preferred to take its name from the city, being the lake of Constance now but in the old days the lake of Bregenz, as long as Bregenz was the name of the city which is now called Constance.[96] It is said also to be full of fish and of almost incredible depth, such that in places there is a hundred and fifty feet of water between surface and bottom; for they say that vast mountain masses are hidden in its depths. The head of the Dominican society,[97] a man of the highest character and of solid learning, but with a remarkable turn of eloquence in his public sermons, presented me with an immense fish out of the lake, which they commonly call a trout – a gift fit for a king, had it been offered in our part of the world. Leaving the lake on its right, the Rhine glides for some little distance past the city of Constance, and then, as though not serious and merely indulging its fancy, it makes an island, which is occupied by a well-known house of nuns;[98] thereafter it runs together again and makes a smaller lake, which they call for some unknown reason the Venetian lake.[99] Thence it flows in a regular channel, full of whirlpools for the most part but navigable after a fashion, as far as a town, formerly an administrative centre under the Empire, called Schiffhausen,[100] I suppose because the river was crossed there by ship before there was a bridge. For not far below there are falls over which the Rhine hurls itself with a great roar; though in other places too it is frequently interrupted by cataracts and blocked with boulders, and so is scarcely fit for navigation as far as Basel.

But it is time for my story to return to Constance. The city has many claims to fame, not least the cathedral, which, though very ancient, is an elegant building, and the council once held there under the presidency of the emperor, and most particularly because that is where Jan Hus was burned.[101] Presents arrived for me from all directions, some from quite distant places. One man sent me some excellent wine, another a present of game, another fish; and so it went on. The city officers sent me their respects with a

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[96] Bregenz is, of course, a city at the other end of the lake.

[97] Antonius Pyrata, called Guldenmünster (d 1534), preacher to the Dominicans of Constance and vicar of the provincial; see Rublack 248–50.

[98] The only island between Constance and the Untersee is the Insel, with a Dominican friary but no nunnery.

[99] The Untersee (Venetum)

[100] Ie, Schaffhausen

[101] The Council of Constance (1414–18), called at the insistence of Emperor Sigismund to end the papal schism, had the Bohemian heretic Jan Hus burned at the stake in 1415.

gift of wine, and for several days the town band played near by, for this is another mark of the respect they pay to selected visitors. If you also wish to know who dined with us, the regular guests beside Beatus and Eppendorf were a physician by the name of Johann,[102] a young man but distinguished for his wit and learning and no less for his good sense and modesty, and Michael Hummelberg,[103] who is (to give you a brief description of him) in good manners and scholarship and charm of character a second Rhenanus. Wanner,[104] their preacher, was there too, a man of true gospel integrity.

Once I had been brought to bed, when I had recovered a little strength, I used to devote an hour or so to the friends who came to greet me, but only a select group and those who had an introduction, for I was in no position to give everyone what he wanted. The bishop with his habitual kindness wished to do me such honour as he could; but my host warned him that I ate little, or rather nothing, and could not stand a crowded, noisy party, so would he please invite no one to meet me and make no special preparations beyond his daily style. He agreed, and invited nobody to dinner beyond that little society of ours. He took his leave of me with more respect, I am sure, than I deserved, and I went on to visit Ennio, bishop of Veroli,[105] who was there at the time as apostolic nuncio, for we had made friends already in an exchange of letters; and he came to meet me with as much alacrity as if someone really important had come to see him. We sat down, the two of us, and talked about all sorts of things; for he is a man of great wisdom, and long experience in the affairs of princes has given him exceptional judgment. The fact that we were of the same age and were sufferers from the same complaint increased the good will between us; for he too had been a victim to the stone, and had picked up the complaint from the same cause – the wine of those regions, which is thin and acid, rough and raw, both unkind and unpleasant.[106] On changing his wine, he had ceased to have any trouble, or at least had much less. He also gave me some other remedies which had been sent him from Milan. He too was making preparation for a journey to Italy, and nothing stood in the way except a papal brief, which he was hourly expecting; he wanted me to travel with him. For my part, I was much attracted, for Trent, they told me, was not more than six days' journey distant. We had to take that road because of the hostilities between the

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[102] Menlishofer (Ep 1335 n10)

[103] Ep 1253 n6

[104] Ep 1335 n5

[105] Ep 1282

[106] See Ep 1316 introduction.

imperial forces and the French.[107] Such are the monarchs with whom we are now blessed! The Alpine meadows which smiled upon us from nearby were attractive enough; but my friends were all against it – to no purpose, had not the stone, that brutal counsellor, persuaded me to make for Basel again and flutter back to my nest.

All this time, while Botzheim my host was finding a string of reasons to delay me, and the boatmen were leading me a dance – for I had decided to travel by boat downstream as far as Schiffhausen, having no confidence that I could endure the bumping up and down on horseback, such was the state I was in – I waited in Constance for nearly three weeks. At length, as the sailors lied without ceasing, as is their privilege or at least their custom, resentment gave me fresh strength: we mounted our horses at eight o'clock and sped on wings to Schiffhausen before three in the afternoon. On returning to Basel, it seemed a good plan to try some Burgundy[108] which had been given me some days before in spite of my protest by that very generous man Nikolaus von Diesbach,[109] dean and bishop-designate of Basel – what they now call coadjutor. On first tasting it I did not much fancy it, but the night following showed its true colours; my digestion was suddenly so much mended that I seemed reborn – a new man. I had, to be sure, always attributed this trouble to certain wines, most of which, though raw and acid and therefore very bad for the digestion, yet make their way easily into the kidneys and carry crude matter along with them. Besides which, as though they had no curse on them already, people doctor them with disastrous chemicals – lime, alum, resin, sulphur, salt – for the water which they add so generously is the least of evils. In a word, most of them are only fit to be drunk by heretics; for I should suppose these torments a sufficient punishment for any misdemeanour. And yet men can be found willing to get drunk on these dismal fluids!

I had previously tasted certain wines grown in Burgundy, but they were fiery and dry. This one was of a most agreeable colour – you might call it ruby-red, and the taste neither sweet nor dry but very pleasant; neither cold nor fiery, but mellow and bland, so kind in fact to the digestion that even when taken in some quantity it did very little harm; and, a rare quality in wines on the red side, it had a mildly laxative effect, the result, I suppose, of the natural mellowing power which it develops in the stomach. Happy indeed is Burgundy on this count if no other, and well does she deserve to be

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[107] See Ep 1283 n3.
[108] Ep 1316 n7
[109] Ep 1258 n17

called a mother of men, now that she has such milk as this in her breasts! No wonder if the men of old worshipped as gods those whose efforts added some blessing to the life of mortals. Take this wine: the man who introduced me to it, who gave it to me though an introduction was sufficient, did he not give me life rather than liquor? Another cask arrived not inferior to the first, except that the carrier had over-diluted it with water. The other had been sealed with plaster; one could draw out of it but not put anything in; and this one was different. Consequently the other when it arrived was not quite full, and this one full to the top; and that very fact which he intended should prove him an honest carrier betrayed the wine-thief. And meanwhile, those who steal a coin are hanged: those who abstract at the same time one's property and one's life-blood play their pranks with impunity.

And so, my dear Laurinus, I could easily be induced to migrate bag and baggage into Burgundy. For the sake of the wine, you will ask? Why, I would rather settle in an Irish bog than face even one attack of the stone. This at least I owe to all I have written, that whatever part of the world I turn to, I shall never lack friends. In the whole of Germany at any rate, wide as it is, I believe there is no city that will not be most ready to give my poor self a home, if I took a fancy to move somewhere else. Nor should I be very far from the truth if I said the same thing of Italy and France. At least, I have had the kindest letters inviting me to visit some of them; and those I have visited hitherto on the way to or from Constance or Sélestat have made me welcome with a gift of wine, which is the traditional present made to visiting strangers as a mark of respect. This is a kind of distinction which I am so far from enjoying that I have told my friends to arrange that nothing of the sort should happen, not solely because I think the honour should be reserved for others who are eminent men and not for someone in all respects so insignificant as myself, but also because, when one is tired or busy with other things, these compliments are sometimes more truly a hindrance than a privilege.

And another thing, since I have begun to act the braggart soldier in the play.[110] Need I tell you of all the complimentary letters, either from scholars or from eminent men, which reach me here even from distant lands and bring gifts with them? Need I recount the learned men, some of them actually in exalted positions, who have come to this place from distant parts with no purpose except to set eyes on Erasmus? I do not doubt that they experience what is described in the Greek proverb 'I found ashes where I hoped for gold.'[111] But whatever be my own merits, these things at least

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[110] Pyrgopolinices in Plautus' *Miles gloriosus*

[111] *Adagia* I xi 30

expose the shameless inventions of these noisy rascals who, as you say in your letter, had been putting it about in your part of the world that I could find nowhere safe to live in Germany;[112] and therefore, I suppose, whenever I go anywhere, I make a habit of asking for police protection! In any case, what would prevent me from visiting many cities – a thing I would sometimes have done for my own amusement – had my literary labours allowed me the time for it – is the stoves,[113] which are going full blast here all year round with scarcely three months off; and the lodging I have provided myself in Basel I cannot take round with me.

Then there was an equally shameless lie: they put it about that I had bought a house here in Basel and purchased rights of citizenship, presumably because I never meant to return to your part of the world. Supposing I liked everything about Germany – and I do like a great deal – one thing at least drives me away from here, and that is the universal use of stoves; which means that I live by myself and cannot even visit other people without risk to my health, nor can anyone else visit me without inconvenience, for they dislike my cold house as much as I hate their hot ones. One thing is perfectly true: there is a man in Basel who offered me as a present a house he had bought for four hundred gold florins, in which I now live.[114] But I have neither bought it nor accepted it as a gift. The idea of citizen rights has never crossed my mind even in a dream. A man I know who is of some considerable standing in Zürich[115] has proposed two or three times in letters that I should accept citizenship there. His suggestion surprised me very much, and I replied[116] that I wished to be a citizen of the whole world, and not of one town in it.

As for my going to France,[117] and their saying this is practically the only refuge I still have, this story is not wholly without foundation. I was convinced that the wine I drank was the cause of my complaint, and had not yet discovered that such good wine could be supplied from nearby in Burgundy; and had it been possible, there were different rumours current here at the time which inspired the fear that I might not be altogether safe from war here in the future. Had anything of the sort happened, Burgundy

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[112] See lines 1–19 of this letter.

[113] See lines 213–16, 577–8.

[114] Presumably Rhenish florins, since the reference is to Froben's house in Basel, and therefore a sum worth about £98 gros Flemish; if Florentine florins, worth £133 6s 8d gros, or £90 sterling, or £830 tournois. See Ep 1295 n1. On the house, see Ep 1316 n10.

[115] Zwingli

[116] Ep 1314

[117] See Ep 1319 introduction.

itself would not have been enough to quench my thirst. But since that was, as I say, unknown to me, and rumours of this sort filled me with misgivings, I began to think a little about going to France, with the idea that even with wars all round it would provide me with a supply of wine. I mentioned the subject to François,[118] archbishop of Embrun, who came to see me two or three times, being here at that time on a mission; and he volunteered to arrange for the issue of an official passport from the king which would make it possible for me to perform the journey in greater safety, if I should decide to do so.[119] This most obliging young man, quite delighted and boasting at the king's table that in Basel he had seen Erasmus, put the matter of the passport in train; the cardinal of Lorraine[120] was there at the moment. The king agreed to his request, and gladly too. Then, the next time he saw Budé, whom he has promoted to be one of the inner circle at court,[121] 'I say, Budé,' he said, 'we shall soon have Lefèvre in this France of ours.' When Budé replied that Lefèvre was in France all the time, the king realized he had got the name wrong and said, 'Erasmus, it was Erasmus I meant to say. For the passport is ready, so that he can get here safely.'

I was tempted by thoughts of my old sojourn in France, a country I have always found delightful. I was tempted by the way he recalled me with such munificent offers six years ago.[122] Had I accepted them then, I should at least, to say no more, have escaped this prolonged contest with a number of blockheads and vain babblers in Louvain, nor would my ears burn with this sort of tragic bedlam, which keeps everything here at fever pitch. And my finances would be somewhat more ample than they are now, or at least less constrained; perhaps my health would be better too, for I have so often been in mortal danger from the wine here and the stink of the stoves. I was tempted also by the knowledge that if I lived in France, I should be much nearer in future to Brabant, to which it would have been possible to slip across even in wartime, thanks to my acquaintance and private friendships with those who hold the cities near the border on both sides.[123] There was one obstacle, war among the three kings.[124] To one of them, Charles, I am actually bound by oath; with the second, the king of England, I have many ties of obligation, as I have with the whole English people; the third, by which I mean the king of France, I cannot fail to be warmly attached to for the generous favour he has shown me. I hoped that the efforts of this new pope at any rate would soon produce peace among them.[125] Not that the war concerned me at all, for I was not approaching France at the head of an army or in hopes of securing some high office in the king's household, but in order to pass life more agreeably than I did here, in the pursuit of literature and the Muses among my modest scholarly friends. And so the passport has now been many months in my possession, and I have not used it.

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[118] Tournon (Ep 1319)

[119] See Ep 1319 n6.

[120] Jean de Lorraine (1498–1550), son of Duke René II, bishop of Metz and cardinal, both since 1518

[121] On Budé and his recent promotion, see Ep 1328.

[122] See Ep 522 introduction.

[123] Eg, with the family of Adolph of Burgundy, heer van Veere (Ep 93), whose principal residence was the castle at Tournehem; Ep 80 introduction

[124] Epp 1283 n3 and 1306 n22

You will say 'Why not come here instead?' Because in your part of the world there were wars seething everywhere, and there was said to be an immense shortage of everything, but specially of French wine – which is in very short supply in your country even in peacetime, if one wants the real thing. There were also certain madmen who had had a sword put into their hands,[126] and it was no pleasure to be either their colleague or their opponent. And I thought I had already fought long enough with certain monsters who, having neither the will nor the ability to be of some use, yet find time to spend their whole lives simply in harrassing those who pursue the humanities, with their scurrilities if nothing else. Last but not least, from France it would always have been a very short trip to join you, had anything invited me.

That gives you the whole story, briefly but without concealment. As for your saying in your letter that you have heard from several people of my unpopularity even in Germany, this may perhaps be true; and it is no surprise, for there are backbiters everywhere. For my part, I do all I can to ensure that no man shall speak ill of me through my own fault. However, if I were to hope for such good fortune as never yet befell anyone and think I could contrive that absolutely no one should speak ill of me, it really would be time to spit in my own bosom.[127] Rome has Zúñiga;[128] Germany too has several men who do not know how to keep a civil tongue in their heads. They tell me that some people who are passionate Lutherans, as they call them, complain that I am milk and water, that I butter up the princes and am too fond of peace. For my part, to tell the truth, I would rather err in that direction, not merely because it is safer but because it is better morally. Let every man enjoy his own opinion. There are some too on the other side who

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[125] See Epp 1304 n30 and 1353 n30.

[126] Especially Baechem (Ep 1254 n6), who had been made an assistant inquisitor in 1520. Cf Allen Ep 1358:36–7.

[127] *Adagia* I vi 94

[128] Ep 1260 n36

deliberately try to bring suspicion on me, as though I had some agreement with the Lutherans. But rumours of this kind, which are purposely invented by both sides, spring up at random and easily dissolve in the same way. And certain people, to be sure, have to thank their old-fashioned characters for the way they are surprisingly upset by worthless rumours of this kind.

There was a widespread yarn here lately that my books had been burned in Brabant,[129] and that too on the authority of Father Jacob of Hoogstraten,[130] an old acquaintance of mine at least, if not a friend, and this brazen invention had actually been spread by educated men in letters full of irresponsible gossip. I perceived at once that this was a trick, started by certain people for whom I do not know what name I ought to use, but some call them Lutherans – men whose object is to rouse a simple, easily deluded character like myself to attack Jacob of Hoogstraten; because, if I should have written anything at all outspoken against him, I should be obliged to change sides and join their camp. A cunning plan, was it not! But the facts soon showed that in my own country they had never even thought of such a thing.

This was followed by another rumour even more outrageous, based on a letter that purported to be sent from Rome. With this had been joined the name of a man who commands great respect. The story was told as a known fact, and with great feeling, in a letter to my friend Botzheim from a reliable and scholarly man in Rome, whose name I knew. Botzheim wrote me a long letter[131] almost in a state of panic, to report that my books had been publicly condemned in Rome in the words of the pope himself.[132] I simply laughed; I recognized another invention very like the last one. The purpose was, of course, that a man like myself, innocent of the world and easily won over, should be provoked by this to attack the pope both by word of mouth and in writing, and should be obliged, having done that, to change sides and take refuge with them. In any case, what a brazen invention it was was proved not only by a number of letters written from Rome, but by a brief lately sent me by the pope himself[133] – at least, I never yet received anything in all my life more affectionate or more complimentary. Not but what, as far as praise of myself is concerned, I understand this as an indication of the sort of man I ought to be, not a picture of what I am. At any rate, approval or affection from such a pope as this I find quite acceptable. And for fear I might pay

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[129] See Ep 1275 n16.

[130] Ep 1299 n25

[131] Perhaps that mentioned in Ep 1335:1

[132] See Ep 1324 introduction.

[133] Ep 1324

insufficient attention to the brief, someone I know in the papal household,[134] and not its most junior member, wrote and told me that when the pope found the wording of the diploma somewhat lukewarm, because the man who had drafted it[135] is a friend of mine and had written about me with some restraint on account of the special friendship between us, the Holy Father himself dictated much of it in his own words. And in the same letter this friend of mine offers me a benefice by no means to be despised, of which he is now in possession, and he will resign from it whenever I wish.

Nor is there any basis in this for noisy protests that I have been corrupted by a share in the spoils and am therefore a deserter from the cause of truth.[136] I will admit that this is a true accusation if I have ever accepted any gifts of this kind;[137] though if I were to accept one, there would be plenty of precedent for my doing so. What little fortune I have was entirely mine before Luther was known to the world at large, and came my way without my seeking it. Half was forced upon me despite my protests by the archbishop of Canterbury,[138] and half was generously offered me unsought by the emperor Charles.[139] Even supposing I were to lose some of that, I shall increase my income by reducing my expenses. If I could have been dragged into this battle by rewards, that would have happened long ago. I was deterred by thoughts of the size of the task on the one hand and my own weakness on the other.

And now listen to a third invention, more brazen than either of the other two. They had put it about that the supreme pontiff had written some sort of an attack on me, and that many people had seen it. I scented their game immediately. Of course the purpose of this imaginary pope is to provoke me to write or say something unwise. But I have learned from the apostolic Epistles[140] not to speak ill of my prince, but to revere a good one, and endure a bad one if my protests prove ineffectual.

The other party too tell their own tales, for some of its members have such an idea of the way to defend the see of Rome that if they were to

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[134] Barbier; see Ep 1345:17–19. His letter was presumably contemporary with Ep 1324.

[135] Hezius; see Epp 1324:137, 1339 introduction.

[136] Cf Ep 1352:156–9. This became an especially hot issue during the controversy with Hutten; see Ep 1341A:1196ff, 1645ff. See also Allen Epp 1435:16–17, 1437:172, 1459:54, 1477:7, and Böcking II 332:47–333:3 (Otto Brunfels' *Responsio ad Erasmi Spongiam*); cf Ep 1341A n285.

[137] Cf Ep 1326:8–13.

[138] Ep 1341A n364

[139] Ep 1273 n4 and lines 100–1, 286–8 of this letter

[140] Acts 23:5; Rom 13:1–6; 1 Pet 2:18–19; Tit 2:9, 3:1–2

attempt the most desperate measures they could not do more harm. These men had lately spread a rumour that many of Luther's party were flocking to Basel[141] for the sake of asking my opinion, and even that Luther himself was in hiding here. This rumour was doing me absolutely no harm here, where there are a great many people who know it is entirely false. I only wish it were true that all the Lutherans and equally the anti-Lutherans were flocking here to ask my advice, and would be willing to follow what advice I give them! The affairs of men would be in slightly better case, I do believe. Many men do foregather here in order to greet me,[142] and to set eyes on me, sometimes in troops and most of them strangers. Not one of them has ever declared in my hearing that he was a Lutheran, nor have I been given the job of asking that question – and I am no diviner;[143] nor has anyone ever begun to be acquainted with me or be recommended to me on the ground that he was a Lutheran. Before this division reached its present bitterness I used to enjoy literary friendships with nearly all the scholars in Germany and greatly, to be sure, did I appreciate them. Several of them have now grown cool towards me and some are entirely estranged; there are even those who openly declare themselves my enemies and foretell my destruction. I also enjoyed contacts with many who now take a more savage line against Luther than I could wish, and indeed than is expedient for their own cause. I dismiss no one from my friendship if he is a little over-inclined towards Luther, nor do I renounce the friendship of anyone if he is more than normally hostile to Luther, since each acts as he does from honest conviction. For so I interpret the case, both in a friend and in an honourable man.

There did come to Basel men whom they say are suspected of sharing Luther's opinions, and I am ready to take all the responsibility for this if one single one of them came here on an invitation from me and if I had not made it abundantly clear to all my friends that I found this acutely embarrassing. But if people find their way here who belong to one faction or the other, how can they have the face to accuse me? I don't keep the gates of the city of Basel or hold any public office. Hutten was here for a few days on a visit. During that time he never visited me nor I him;[144] and yet, if he had come to me, I should not have refused to see him, as an old friend and one whose

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141 Cf Ep 1335 n9.
142 Cf lines 560–2 of this letter.
143 An apparent quotation from the *Hecuba* of Euripides; see *Adagia* I iii 36 (CWE 31 265 13–16).
144 On Hutten, his visit to Basel, and Erasmus' failure to receive him, see Ep 1331 n24.

wonderfully fertile and lively mind I cannot fail to find attractive even now. For if he has any business apart from that, it is nothing to do with me. Since however he was in poor health and could not leave his stove-heated room, nor could I endure it, the result was that we never met. Cronberg,[145] Franz's son-in-law, came to see me twice, and I found his character and conversation quite delightful. Here clearly was a straightforward person entirely free from guile, but much gifted intellectually. Our meeting, however, was of no great length and took place before witnesses. In fact, were Luther here in person, I would gladly have a talk with him, in hopes of giving him free and friendly advice on many points; although it may perhaps be too late now, except that, as Paul says, Christian charity hopeth all things.[146]

I hate discord as the worst of all evils, not only in accordance with Christ's teaching and example but from some deep-rooted impulse in my nature; and it torments me all the more when I consider how this world of ours is seething with both public and private hate, so that there is scarcely a vestige of true friendship left anywhere. It is not even permissible to love those who richly deserve our feelings for them, nor is any quarter of the world free from the contagion of this plague. One party it is impossible to despise and the other will not let us despise it; both seem to have in their hearts, if not on their lips, the old Homeric tag.[147] And I doubt whether either of them can be suppressed without the disastrous collapse of good causes at the same time. It cannot be denied that Luther has drawn attention to many abuses which it is in the interests of Christendom to rectify and which the world could endure no longer. And it is in this world-wide tempest in human affairs that my unhappy lot is cast, at a time of life when I should as it were have retired long ago to a well-earned leisure, to enjoy, as I justly might, the fruits of my laborious researches; or at least I might be allowed to be a spectator of this play, as I myself am so unfitted to be an actor and there are so many others on every side who crowd of their own accord upon the stage. Both sides, however, have taken special care to make this impossible; one party is eager to lure me on with their tricks until they can carry me off by force to join their camp, while in the other party there are some who strive by every means in their power to drive me into the ranks of the enemy, with no other motive except to use this way of destroying one who is a powerful supporter of the ancient tongues, of the humanities, and of classical theology, and whom they were not able to unseat from his

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[145] Ep 1331 n23

[146] 1 Cor 13:7

[147] Perhaps *Iliad* 4.185–7, cited in *Adagia* III viii 21 (*Contemnentis dicterium*) as an example of the light-hearted dismissal of injuries

position. Thus it has come about, through no fault of my own but as a result of the misguided zeal of certain individuals, that in both parties there are certain people ill disposed towards me; on the one side there are those who interpret my silence as support for the party they hate, while among those who support Luther some are bitterly indignant because through cowardice,[148] as they term it, I desert the gospel cause, and not merely desert it but even have some scheme on foot for bolstering up the papal (they would say, the papist) cause.[149]

But the others have had their answer from me often. At this stage I would gladly take on some supporter of Luther, but it must be one with a sense of fairness. I believe I could make even him accept my case, on the basis of points which he himself will concede me. First, I shall ask him what he thinks of Luther. He is sure to reply that Luther is a saintly character, a follower of the gospel, who has revived true Christian piety. Then I shall ask the man whether Luther's devoted followers resemble him. He will confirm that this is so without a doubt. I shall next enquire whether there is any precedent in the Gospels for the use of chicanery and violence to force a man into joining your own faction, especially as they well know that to profess their views is no less perilous than it was once to be a professing Christian. It was the Jewish practice to wander over sea and land in hopes of attracting one proselyte into the meshes of the law.[150] The apostles never tried to win a man by worldly artifice, and concealed those who had confessed Christ's name until the moment of profession could not be deferred.

I could use these words if to profess oneself a member of the Lutheran faction were no different from professing the teaching of the gospel, and if any one of them had ever professed it in secret. As things are, I leave the nature of that profession to be judged by others. In any case, be it what it may, it came into existence without my knowledge and made progress in spite of discouragement from me, even through all the stages during which the world was still ready for the most part to applaud the play. During this time there followed the *Captivitas babylonica*[151] and the *Abrogatio missae*, a defence of the whole Hussite teaching,[152] not to mention other things which,

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[148] Cf Allen Epp 1384:20, 1459:80.

[149] Epp 1352 introduction, 1341A:1208–13

[150] Matt 23:15

[151] Luther's *De captivitate babylonica* of October 1520 (WA VI 497–573), which was a brutal assault upon the Catholic sacraments

[152] Luther's *De abroganda missa privata* of January 1522 (WA VIII 411–76) contains a passage (425:15–25) equating the church's condemnation of Hus with condemnation of the gospel.

as they are written in German, I cannot even read.[153] And yet hitherto, for many other reasons but above all because I perceived that the business was beyond my understanding, I have made no public utterance on Luther's opinions. I have only put on record in several published letters that I am entirely opposed to the way the Lutherans band themselves together, and that in such of his books as I happen to have read I find the modesty of a Christian much to seek and could wish there were less bitterness.[154]

At this point I will appeal once again to that friend of Luther's. Is it his view that this criminal purpose, which he pursues at great risk to his own life and great risk to other people's, is a noble enterprise and worthy of all praise? He will reply, I suppose, that it is entirely in the spirit of the apostles and deserves undying fame. Very well, I will take him at his word. Who then would have failed to reckon me the most arrogant of all men alive, had I claimed so much credit for myself in a field where I did not deserve the smallest scrap? Who in fact would not have thought me as crazy as any Orestes,[155] if I had wished to purchase an entirely false reputation at the price of great personal risk? Most monarchs and prelates were already convinced that for the whole of Luther's teaching I was the source, the authority, the champion, and the Atlas who bore it on my back – even that the books which circulate under his name with Luther on the title-page are really mine. Was it my duty to let such glory be ascribed to me, and say nothing? John cried, 'I am not the Christ';[156] was it right for me to remain silent? 'But you put this on record,' they say, 'in too many letters.' Not at all: with all these letters I can still hardly convince certain people, so deeply has this most brazen falsehood sunk into men's minds.

Then again, as regards his lack of modesty and his virulence, I will ask my Lutheran another question. Is it expedient that Luther's teaching should spread through the world as widely as possible and prove wholly acceptable alike to high and low? He will of course reply, 'Nothing matters more.' Why then are certain people so indignant with my humble self because I expressed a wish to see Luther's books free from two features which do more than anything to reduce their credibility and alienate all men of good will, their arrogant air and their excessive virulence? And yet these faults are so outstandingly obvious that even his most devoted supporters have no excuse to put forward, except that our sins richly deserve to be chastised

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[153] Cf Ep 1313 n16.
[154] See, for example, Epp 967, 1033. Erasmus himself did not publish Ep 939.
[155] Orestes was driven mad by the Furies after murdering his mother, Clytemnestra.
[156] John 1:20, 3:28

with scorpions by such a bitter critic. As far as I am concerned, at any rate, it was this ferocity of what he wrote and the flow of abuse that he has always ready that first made me have my suspicion of Luther's spirit. Nor do I doubt that a great many other people have had the same experience as myself. Suppose Luther's teaching is religious, how many men do you suppose have been set against it by the book he wrote in answer to the king of England?[157] – a prince compared with whom there is hardly another alive today more richly endowed with every kingly virtue or further removed from tyranny or more popular with his own people or who sets a higher value on humane learning and outstanding excellence. Let there be no suspicion of flattery if I pay this tribute to one from whom I receive nothing[158] and aspire to receive nothing.

This at least cannot be denied, that the king's intentions in writing were religious,[159] and that if he brought in some abuse of Luther, not only could he plead Luther's example as an excuse but he was attacking a man for whom he was convinced that far stronger language was appropriate. And yet, if there is anything in that book which does not belong, I suspect it is certain unusually bitter remarks. And so, had Luther acknowledged the king's religious zeal and boldly brought the matter to a conclusion with solid arguments, without infringing the respect due to a king, he would, I believe, have done his case far more good; and I will now assume, for the purpose of discussion with my Lutheran, that his case is excellent. What could be more unprofitable than abuse aimed at great princes? It is the easiest thing for them to pay no attention, and it is the work of a moment to answer the mockery if they so please. For my part, neither love nor hate for any mortal man shall make me consciously a traitor to the truth of the gospel. Monarchs can tolerate free criticism, subversive impudence they cannot take. My only object in saying this is to make clear how little opportunity I have given the Lutherans themselves to be furious with me with good reason. Not that I am afraid of them, if it is their own warped minds and no fault of mine that makes them attack me; but I should like my reasonableness to be known to all men. For several letters from different sources come flying on ahead like skirmishers, armed with threats of I know not what; and one among them[160] breathes very considerable venom, even before we come to close quarters.

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[157] See Ep 1308 n3.

[158] Ie, no permanent income from pension or benefice; see Epp 296:117–27, 1341A:1732–7.

[159] See Epp 1227–8.

[160] Perhaps the *Iudicium D. Martini Lutheri de Erasmo Roterodamo ad amicum*; see Epp 1341A n315, 1348 n5.

At this point I should like to summon up once more the supporter of Luther whom I have selected as a reasonably fair-minded judge of this case. The reasons for their indignation are something like this. I was thought somewhere in my letters to offer some degree of hope that, if I were given leave and allowed the leisure, I would do what I could for the peace of Christendom and the honour of the apostolic see.[161] How can this offer be regarded as an attack on Luther? But let them suppose I have attacked him in print, no matter how – which is untrue, to be sure, even now, when the whole world of its own accord is sharpening its pen to attack him – why must I be the only target for their indignation, if I were to rouse myself under orders from those whom it is scarcely safe to disobey? One point, I think, my judge must grant me: Luther's sense of fair play is not so much perverted that, while he takes the liberty to differ not only from all the Doctors of the church but from all the conciliar decrees as well, he is indignant if anyone differs from him at any point and thinks himself affronted if anyone, while abstaining from personal abuse, uses the testimony of Scripture, which he thinks so important, and sound reasoning to pursue the truth. This is the course he summons us all to take; and the Roman pontiff summons us to do no more than put Luther to the test of sound reasoning and the testimony of Scripture. And so it was hardly fair to threaten me, before having seen what line my writing might have taken and with what moderation I had written.

Many people were aroused by ridiculous suspicions which had led them to believe that the attack on Luther published by the king of England was the product of my bow and spear;[162] only that the king's name had been put on the title-page to make it a heavier blow to Luther. For all the idiocy of this, I had letters written in all seriousness from great princes and from scholarly friends trying to elicit a confession of its truth.[163] Had this perfectly idiotic suspicion won the day, Luther would, I suppose, have aimed the same charming raillery on my luckless head as he now does on the king. Yet all this time it was some years since I had set foot in England;[164] and when I paid my respects to the king at Calais[165] in the presence of courtiers past counting, a scheme of writing against Luther was not even thought of; all thought was for the settlement of the dispute. For the *Captivitas babylonica* had not yet appeared. In fact I did not know the book[166] had been written

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[161] See, for example, Epp 1144, 1167, 1195.

[162] Cf Ep 1275:90–1. See also *Adagia* I vi 19.

[163] Epp 1290:20–1, 1298:9–19, 1313:74–92

[164] The last visit had been in April 1517; see Epp 566 and 577 introductions.

[165] July 1520; Ep 1106 introduction

[166] Ie, King Henry's *Assertio*; Ep 1275 n25

until I saw it in print; and that was in Bruges, when the cardinal of York[167] was there for negotiations about a settlement between the emperor and the king of France. I was waiting at the cardinal's door, talking to his principal people and expecting to pay him my respects at the first opportunity. At length out came Marino Caracciolo,[168] the apostolic nuncio, with a book in his hands. I asked whether I might open it, and he said yes. I read nothing but the title and the inscription that the king had written with his own hand at the foot of the first page; and then, since at the moment there was no time for more, I gave him back the book, saying with a smile 'I envy Luther such an adversary.' He scowled in reply at first rather than smiled, but when I had expressed the same meaning more clearly, he replied 'I too congratulate the Holy Father on finding such a champion.'

Meanwhile, although I too had definitely been promised a copy of the book several times, by some mischance it was never delivered to me, the reason I suppose being the cardinal's unexpectedly early departure; for that too is like a king. Yet a copy was meant for me, which the king had marked with his own hand, 'For Master Erasmus.' This was dispatched in the month of August in the year 1521, Roman style, and delivered to me in Basel in February 1522. Nor did I ever have a chance to read the king's book, except in a pitiful Strasbourg edition;[169] and after reading it through, I also read Luther's reply shortly afterwards. That is all I know about the book, and not a hair's breadth more than that. Nor could I ever detect whether the king had had anyone's help in writing it. The style is clearly his own, and he has a fertile and ready mind for every purpose; and yet, had he wished to use scholarly help, he has a court overflowing with gifted authors and learned men.[170] In any case, I praised nothing in my letter except the spirit shown by the king;[171] and what else could I praise when I had not read the book? At this point I await the verdict of my Lutheran: is it right that these suspicions like an empty dream should count against me with these champions of the gospel?

Now let me tell you another charge I have to meet. It is counted against me that I did not retire from the stage with a final bow four years ago,[172]

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[167] Wolsey, whose visit to Bruges took place in August 1521; see Ep 1223 introduction.

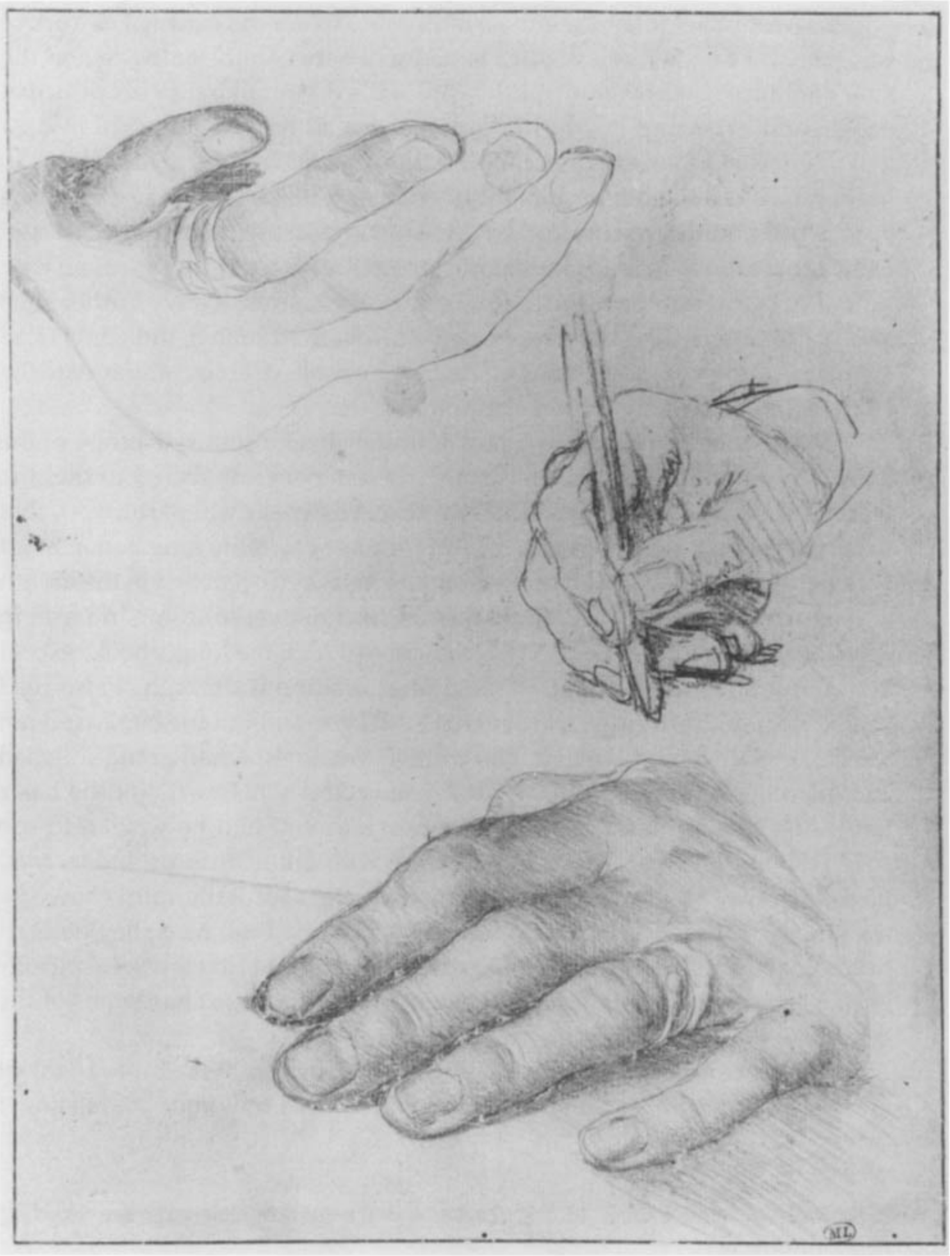
[168] Ep 1263 n1

[169] J. Grüninger published two editions at Strasbourg, on 9 August and 7 September 1522.

[170] See Ep 1313 n13.

[171] Ep 1228:11–13

[172] It is not known who had levelled this charge at this time. Luther expressed



The hands of Erasmus
Hans Holbein the Younger, 1523
The Louvre, Paris

satisfied presumably with the reputation and reward I had earned by devoting the ancient tongues to serve theology, by chasing the frogs of sophistry from our universities, and by despising ceremonies and urging men to return to the pure springs of Holy Scripture. On this head at least they award me more credit than I am willing to accept. But I am not permitted to leave this stage until my heavenly producer has given me my orders. And yet I have played a part up to now on a level that means leaving the grand scenes for the likes of Roscius and Aesopus;[173] and in the long run I myself prefer to play in comedy rather than tragedy. I measure my capacity according to my voice and physical strength and acting skill. 'But you stand in the way,' they tell me, 'of those who will act out the rest of the play.' What are they complaining of now? 'This man,' they say, 'still values highly and acknowledges the church of Rome. He tells us the Roman pontiff is still to be respected. He writes that no man of good will ever withdrew himself from the pope's kingdom.'

All this and much more is to be found in what they write. The pope's kingdom I have never mentioned. I have written somewhere or other that all religious men everywhere support the authority of the pope.[174] Who would not support the authority of a man who by his evangelical qualities gives us a reflection of Christ in our midst? And this I always add, when I attach any importance to papal authority. Wherein the true authority of the Roman pontiff lies is a matter of common knowledge, and I have made it clear in more than one passage in my works.[175] For my part, I have learned from the writings of evangelists[176] and apostles,[177] and have discovered that some importance is to be attached to heathen princes too, unless their commands are plainly impious. Judged by this rule my opinion is that no bishop's authority should be despised. Surely it is impious to despise a godly bishop? But they give a picture of the kind whom they wish to be despised. 'And who,' they say, 'is this Roman pontiff? Is he not one who puts the gospel in the fire, God's enemy who leads astray all Christian people?' If such is the

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similar sentiments in a letter of 20 June 1523 to Oecolampadius; WA-Br III 96–7 (=BAO no 157).

[173] Q. Roscius, Rome's greatest comic actor, and his contemporary Claudius Aesopus, Rome's greatest tragic actor, both friends of Cicero

[174] See Epp 1144:9–10, 1167:386–7, 1195:47–8.

[175] On Erasmus' recognition (in the *Annotationes* and the *Paraphrases*) of the biblical basis of the Roman primacy, see Harry J. McSorley 'Erasmus and the Primacy of the Roman Pontiff: Between Conciliarism and Papalism' *Archive for Reformation History* 65 (1974) 37–54, especially 40–1.

[176] Matt 22:17–21

[177] See n140 above.

pope of whom they speak, no pope has ever had my approval. And yet, even were the pope like that, it is not my business to cast him down from his throne. Christ lives to this day, and he has in his hand a scourge with which to drive such characters from the temple.[178]

'But we cannot hope,' they say, 'that a better one than Leo will follow.' My first point is that I am not Leo's judge; he has his own judge, in whose eyes he stands or falls. If so many good ones have preceded, why have we no hope that he might have a successor like those early popes? On our present pope I express no opinion, for fear of seeming to curry favour.[179] Christ himself answered when urged to do so by a godless high priest, and did not remain completely silent when ordered to speak by Pilate. How does Paul argue his case before Festus and Felix and Agrippa? Naturally, of course, he calls them tyrants, slaves of the evil one, servants of sin, God's enemies who will shortly be consigned to eternal fire![180] And now consider how these men have replied to those who defend my own cautious language. 'This is how Erasmus should speak,' he says: 'Pope, you are Antichrist; you, bishops, are blind leaders; that Roman see of yours is an abomination in the sight of God' – with much else in the same vein, or even more disgusting. They do not approve the courteous language of a man like me unless they have first spoken in this manner – in good gospel style, of course. The first question I will ask my judge is, whether he thinks rules of this kind which he lays down for me are fair; and the second, whether he thinks they do any good to Luther's cause. If I were to write like that of good popes, should I not seem offensive? And if I were to rant in this strain against bad ones, the sole result would be to stir up a hornets' nest to the peril of myself and many others.

There still remains one charge against me, the most serious of all. In my paraphrase, where I explain the ninth chapter of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, I allot a very small share to freedom of the will,[181] for I was following in the steps of Origen and Jerome. To begin with, since a paraphrase is a kind of commentary, and since I state openly that on most points I follow accepted and ancient interpreters, what sacrilege have I committed if in some places I follow Origen and Jerome, who as authorities on Holy Scripture are, I take it, not to be despised? And this happened

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[178] John 2:15

[179] Cf Ep 1304 introduction.

[180] The words here attributed to Paul are not in the scriptural text, but some of the phrases occur in Erasmus' paraphrase on Acts 26:18, published the following year.

[181] Cf Ep 1268:90–3.

before Luther put out his opinion, or rather Wycliffe's, that whatever we do, whether good or bad, is a matter of absolute necessity. For my paraphrase was printed in Louvain in the year 1517,[182] and it had been written in Antwerp some months before it was printed. And meanwhile someone I could name[183] is called 'a complete Erasmian' because he agrees with me on the freedom of the will and disagrees with Luther; yet he is forgiven for this, because he is a young man of promise and will soon change his mind.

At this point I appeal once again to my fair-minded judge. Seeing that I wrote this before Luther's opinion was published, and seeing that all theologians, ancient and modern, take the same view as mine – Origen, Jerome, Chrysostom, Hilary, Arnobius, Scotus, Thomas – why am I put in the dock as though I had started it all? And why is a man who disagrees with Luther called an Erasmian rather than a Hilarian or a Jeronymite? – especially since I have not undertaken a full treatment of the question in my paraphrase, but have touched on it in passing as did Paul himself, who does not deign to reply on that point to a persistent inquirer. And yet observe, dear reader, how much smaller is the share I there allot to the freedom of the will than is done either in the Fathers or in the lectures of more modern scholars. For I suspect that the words at which they take offence are these in chapter 9, for after setting out a captious question which is put to God in an attempt to convict him of injustice, I go on: 'Not at all: something is seated in our own will and endeavour, although it may be so little that, compared with God's goodness freely offered, it may look like nothing. No man is condemned except by his own fault; no man is saved except by the goodness of God. He judges worthy of this those whom he pleases, but in such a way that while you may have cause for gratitude, you can have none for complaint.' I quote this from the paraphrase.[184]

I could see on one side the peril of Scylla, persuading us to put our trust in good works, which I admit is the greatest threat to religion. On the other side I could see Charybdis, a monster yet more terrible, by whom not a few of them are now held fast, saying, 'Let us do as we please; for whether we torment ourselves or please ourselves, what God has once decided is sure to happen.' I therefore controlled my language so as to allot a very small share to freedom of the will, for fear of opening a window for such a mortal form of sloth, which consists in everybody abandoning all efforts towards an

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[182] Ep 710

[183] Mosellanus (Ep 560). See the *Iudicium de Erasmo Roterodamo* (n160 above); WA-Br II 544.

[184] Erasmus here cites the 1517 edition. In the 1532 edition he altered the passage to eliminate the emphasis on free will, thus approximating the views of the Protestant reformers. See CWE 42 55, 153 n15, and cf ibidem xxxv.

improvement of life and doing just anything he takes a fancy to. And yet, when I wrote this, I had no idea that there had been anyone who entirely abolished all the force of free will, an opinion which, even though I were certain of its truth, I should be reluctant to spread abroad in so many words. As things are, everyone knows that philosophers were disputing about fate before the birth of Christ; and from them there have descended to us these insoluble problems about foreknowledge, about predestination by God, about human free will, about contingency of future events, in which I think it the best course not to spend too much anxious time, since this is an abyss no man can get to the bottom of. I would rather teach the doctrines that encourage us to try for the best in every way we can, while yet at the same time claiming no credit for ourselves, but leaving the judgment of everything to God, having developed perfect confidence in his goodness above all else.

Let that judge of mine therefore give his verdict at this point: should something be imputed to me as its author which no one, both of the ancients and the moderns, has failed to say? Is it fair to dispute on this question with me, when you ought rather to deal with all the authorities for this opinion who treat of this matter explicitly, while I have only touched on it briefly and in passing in my paraphrase? It is quite possible that, not being fully informed of all Luther's opinions, I may stumble unawares over some other stone; and if this should happen, are his friends instantly to raise a storm against me? There are so many people everywhere who discharge their hatred of Luther's teaching in loud clamour and a shower of pamphlets; and am I the one man who is not permitted to open his mouth if there is anything I do not much like? Let them at least make this concession to a man whom they rightly describe as cautious, whose knowledge is insufficient and who has no judgment in questions of this kind: allow him on some occasions to accept the verdict of so many recognized authorities, and in a time of such perilous upheavals silently to vote for the opinion of those whose authority has for so many centuries been followed by the Christian world.

Anyone who cannot love Erasmus as a Christian, though a feeble one, must adopt towards him what attitude he pleases; I for my part cannot be different from what I really am. If Christ has given anyone a grander measure of the gifts of the Spirit, and he has the self-confidence, let him use them for Christ's glory. I feel happier meanwhile in following a humbler but a safer course. I cannot fail to abominate discord, I cannot fail to love peace and concord. I see the great obscurity there is even in the affairs of men; I see how much easier it is to rouse an uproar than to pacify it, and I have learned how many are the tricks Satan can play. I would not dare trust my own spirit in everything; far less would I be able to give a reliable opinion on the spirit of other men. I could wish to see all men make a concerted effort to secure the victory of Christ and the establishment among all men of concord in the gospel, so that disorder might be ruled out in favour of sound reasoning, and measures might thus be taken to promote on the one side the authority of the priesthood and on the other the freedom of the people, whom the Lord Jesus wished to be free. Anyone embarked on this course can rely on me to the utmost of my power. But those who prefer to cause universal confusion will not have me, at any rate, as a leader or a colleague. They put forward as their excuse the working of the Spirit. Let them dance then among the prophets – and good luck to them – if they have been inspired by the Spirit of the Lord.[185] That spirit of theirs has not yet seized on me; and when it does so, they may well say, 'Is Saul also himself among the prophets?'[186]

I have no doubt you will have been saying for some time, 'What is the point of all this long and tedious stuff?' This, to be sure: I want you in future not to be shaken in the slightest by any vague rumours of this kind, even if there is no Hilarius[187] at hand to exhilarate you and restore your spirits. Pray give my warmest greetings to your two widow ladies[188] and to all my other friends. As soon as the winter relaxes, I shall take flight from the nest. 'And where will you go?' you ask. To visit you, if there is any gleam of peace and normality. If not, to any place where I can find a more ready supply of the wine that saves my life. For in Rome the plague[189] is playing its unpleasant tricks, and it is no less raging in Paris.[190] Farewell, my excellent friend.

From Basel, 1 February AD 1523

1343 / From Archduke Ferdinand Nürnberg, 15 February 1523

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Archduke Ferdinand's reply to Ep 1323.

FERDINAND BY THE GRACE OF GOD PRINCE AND
INFANTE OF THE TWO SPAINS, ARCHDUKE OF AUSTRIA,
DUKE OF BURGUNDY ETC, LIEUTENANT-GENERAL OF
THE EMPIRE, TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Honourable and learned sir and our sincerely beloved. We have received your letter from Basel,[1] from which we duly learned what you had to say about that admirable work of your composition, the paraphrase on John; and this was most acceptable and gave us great pleasure. It is our wish, and we warmly exhort you thereto, that you should persevere and continue in such valuable activity, in these toilsome labours which deserve the highest praise and commendation, and should take steps, as soon as time permits, to send that paraphrase to the printer,[2] for the general advantage and benefit of all learned and worthy men, and should send a copy thereof to us.[3] This we shall endeavour to acknowledge and repay as opportunity offers,[4] with all the generosity and indulgence at our command, in such ways as we can, nor shall we be unmindful of your merits and your nightly toil.

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[185] An allusion to 1 Sam 10:5–6

[186] 1 Sam 10:11–12, 19:24

[187] See n1 above.

[188] Laurinus' two sisters

[189] See Epp 1324 n12, 1338:66–7.

[190] See Ep 1328:68–9.

Given in our imperial city of Nürnberg, the fifteenth day of the month of February in the year 1523

1344 / From Willibald Pirckheimer Nürnberg, 17 February 1523

This is Pirckheimer's reply to Epp 1337 and 1341. The original letter, no longer extant, was published by Georg Theodor Strobel in his *Vermischte Beiträge zur Geschichte der Litteratur* (Altdorf 1774). The autograph rough draft is in the Stadtarchiv Nürnberg (MS PP.324). Ep 1353 is based on the news contained in this letter.

It is no surprise, Erasmus my distinguished friend, if some people have advised you to make your peace with me, although I was not in the least offended, for there was no shortage of people to stir me up against you at this end, on the ground that a letter from me written to you privately has been published by you in the emperor's court.[1] Personally, having been devoted to you always and more than commonly, and knowing as I do your character and real integrity, I am sure there has been no hostility and no deception on your side in all this. I also know what traps are laid by those who are jealous of you, as much in Rome as in the emperor's court, but

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1343

[1] Ep 1333

[2] The work was finished by early January (AK Ep 902:21–2) and was published in February.

[3] Cf Allen Epp 1357, 1361:12–21, 1376:13–14.

[4] Ferdinand sent a gift of 100 gold florins; Ep 1341A:1740–1 and Allen Ep 1376:14–16.

1344

[1] See Ep 1337 n1.

especially in Lower Germany; I know the strong feelings against you in Luther's party; and I know from long experience how difficult and arduous it is to resist all these insinuations and fight all these trumped-up charges – and fight them in such a way as neither harms God's cause nor sets men against you, to say nothing meanwhile of maintaining your proper reputation. And so it did not hurt my feelings in the least if you gave my letter to other people to read, for there is nothing in it that I might be ashamed of or embarrassed by, and it is to your advantage to make other people realize what a threat the two parties are and the sort of danger that looms on either side. Goodbye therefore to those who try to set us one against the other; I shall abide continually and sincerely in the affection that already exists between us, and have not the least doubt that you will do the same.

In any case, when you say you could wish that some of Luther's people would handle the gospel cause with more discretion, this is a desire you share with many other men. If only the other side in their turn would act with more circumspection and give more scope to reason than to their emotions! Then we should not see so many outbreaks of serious unrest. It would have been possible, and it might still be possible, if not to do away with this business altogether, at least to pacify it to some extent, if it were treated with self-restraint and with a sense of responsibility and with courtesy. But as long as men who are beside themselves and whom God undoubtedly has made unseeing strive to root out the whole thing by terror with threats and despotic penalties and to end it root and branch, not only do they not put out so great a fire, they steadily make it worse. The apostolic legate here[2] has asked the princes that three preachers[3] in this city, admirable men, good scholars, and extremely moderate, should be thrown into chains and sent to Rome for punishment, in return for some statements which according to him were perverse and heretical, when it was afterwards established that they had said nothing of the kind.[4] He also accused one of them,[5] who is a good Hebrew scholar, of being a Jew, when it is perfectly well known that he is the son of Christian parents.

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[2] Chierigati (Ep 1336)

[3] In fact, four preachers were involved: Andreas Osiander (1498–1552) at St Lorenz, Domenicus Schleupner (d 1547) at St Sebald, Thomas Venatorius (c 1488–1551) at the Hospital Church, and Karl Ress (d 1528) at the Augustinian convent (RTA III 411–12; Planitz 307).

[4] The nuncio's demand, presented to the Estates on 3 January 1523, was indignantly rejected by both the diet and the Nürnberg city council (Planitz 307–8, 310; RTA III 410–16, 428, 935–6).

[5] Osiander (RTA III 935.23; Planitz 307)

You would hardly credit, my dear Erasmus, what a bad effect such brazen falsehoods and such outrageous actions have had on the authority of pope and legate equally, and what contempt this has earned them, not only among the citizens of Nürnberg but among the leading princes too, and it very nearly caused serious rioting with grave personal risk to the legate and some other people; the city council of Nürnberg were obliged to police the town by day and to mount nightly pickets to prevent anything so frightful. The legate has done several other things that were very foolish and most unpopular, from which he has earned such public contempt that he dare not show his face in public without embarrassment.[6] No one – I repeat, absolutely no one – pays him the slightest respect, and he is the laughing stock and butt of the whole population.

And all this has happened to him through the fraudulent inventions of the monks,[7] to which he has given more credit than he should have. For they have an intense hatred for the citizens of Nürnberg and call them Lutherans because this year they have abolished all beggars,[8] with such success that no one dares beg in public any more; they provide for them all, however, and generously too, in accordance with the circumstances of the individual. This pious activity is universally approved, and everyone contributes generously from what he has; but the monks think that whatever is given to the poor is thereby diverted from their own greed and gluttony. Hence all these tears and all this hellish uproar. I told the legate by way of mutual friends – for it was not possible for me to go and see him without undue risks – to beware of traps set by the monks, but they had made me too an object of suspicion to him; now he has begun to realize how honourably I dealt with him.

The pope has written to the city council of Nürnberg[9] and made certain

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[6] On the unrest in Nürnberg over the legate's behaviour, see the letter of the Regensburg delegate, Hans Portner, cited in RTA III 925n. Planitz 352 records the nuncio's private complaints about the general hostility towards him in Nürnberg.

[7] In Nürnberg, as elsewhere, the regular clergy, especially the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were the principal opponents of the Reformation. By the end of 1524, they, together with a few conservative patricians (like Pirckheimer), were the only opposition left.

[8] In the *Almosenordnung* adopted in outline by the city council on 23 July 1522 and printed in the summer of 1523; see *Die evangelischen Kirchenordnungen des XVI. Jahrhunderts* ed Emil Sehling et al XI (Tübingen 1961) 17–32. Protestant teaching and the example of Wittenberg were among the chief motives for the adoption of the ordinance.

[9] See RTA III 404n. Breves dated 30 November, addressed to various German cities, were dispatched by the nuncio on 12 January 1523. The city councils were admonished to ban the printing and sale of Luther's works.

perfectly baseless accusations; this is all attributed to the legate, to whom the council have refused to reply though he presses very hard for an answer. He is also accused of some highly criminal conduct, I know not what. The pope has also written to the princes, saying among other things that he freely admits that many scandalous crimes have been committed for some years now at the holy Roman see, and it is on account of these sins that the clergy are now scourged with the heresy of Luther.[10] We have all gone astray, he says; every man has turned to his own way,[11] and there is none found that does good, no, not one.[12] At long last he makes many promises; and I only hope he means them, and if he means them, that he is able to perform them, and if he does perform them, that he achieves some real result! Many men find this impossible; but we must put everything into God's hands. The people of Nürnberg have a bad reputation in some quarters as supporters of Luther because they give such an eager welcome to the teaching of the gospel. If only the Roman party had shown the same moderation and integrity as the Nürnbergers in the past, and still did so today! They would not see and hear and feel so much what they are obliged constantly to endure.

But enough of all this. I would tell you what resolutions were passed at the diet if I had them at hand.[13] Many subjects were brought up for discussion, relating particularly to the establishment of peace for the whole of Germany, but few reached any conclusion, except that the common people were burdened with fresh imposts – all merchandise, whether imported into Germany or exported, is to pay four gold pieces on every hundred,[14] so that these 'kings who devour the common stock'[15] can finance their activities. Whether such an intolerable burden can be endured, the outcome will show. The representatives of the cities all left without taking leave of the princes, and were on no possible terms willing to agree.[16] This

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[10] See Pope Adrian's instructions to Chierigati (c 25 November 1522; RTA III 390–99) and the pope's breve to the German diet (ibidem 399–404), both read to the Estates by the nuncio on 3 January 1523. While Adrian sternly demanded strict enforcement of the Edict of Worms (May 1521), which had outlawed Luther and his followers and condemned his works, he also frankly admitted (as Pirckheimer notes) that the sins of the curia and the clergy were a major source of the current troubles, and he promised reforms.

[11] Isa 53:6

[12] Pss 14 (Vulg 13):3, 53 (52):3

[13] The recess of the diet, adopted on 9 February 1523, is in RTA III 736–59.

[14] The proposed *Reichszollordnung* of January/February 1523 is in RTA III 622–41.

[15] Homer *Iliad* 1.231

[16] The cities presented a formal complaint against the proposed customs levy (RTA III 641–4) and refused to sign the recess. For the rancorous negotiations

the princes very greatly resent, and if I am not mistaken there will be great upheavals over this. The princes are determined that this monstrous impost shall be ratified, and the cities resist absolutely and think anything more tolerable than such inhuman bondage.[17] And here we are, all the time, arming against the Turks, although on our side all is ablaze with discord and resentment, and promising assistance to others when we are destitute of all support ourselves. The princes can see their nobles everywhere preparing to revolt; they know that their subjects are crushed by very heavy burdens; and yet they are hastening to alienate the cities as well. Surely this could not possibly happen unless we were under the pressure of divine retribution. But I go on too long. May God show mercy on us!

When you say in your letter that the pope has sent you a letter full of good will,[18] I was delighted to hear it for the sake of your own reputation and no less for the benefit of your malicious enemies. He shows prudence enough, to be sure, if he mollifies you and other men of learning. For a fair number are irritated already; and Hoogstraten,[19] Eck,[20] Aleandro,[21] and the whole crowd of sophists will leave them absolutely no chance to settle down, unless the pope's authority steps in. The Roman party will discover eventually what a highly dangerous thing it is to put a sword into the hands of men who are crazy, drunken, headstrong, and filled with arrogance and pride, although they have had experience long since of the evils aroused on both sides by impetuosity and rashness that does not stop to think. Certain people keep silence though grossly ill-treated, under cover of papal authority; and they do more to maintain their cause by silence than some others who create an uproar and fill everything with noisy protestations – though when their time comes the quiet people too will perhaps begin to make themselves heard.

But to come after all this to Froben's business. Your last letter[22] arrived in the very nick of time, for it came when Ferdinand was about to depart[23]

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between the princes and the cities on this and related issues, see ibidem 453–554.

[17] The cities carried their case directly to the emperor in Spain. In this instance he sided with them; Karl Brandi, *Kaiser Karl v.* (Darmstadt 1961) 154–5. On the whole, however, his reign was one that saw the power of the cities vis-à-vis the princes decline sharply.

[18] Ep 1324

[19] Ep 1299 n25

[20] Ep 769

[21] Ep 1256 n11

[22] Ep 1341

[23] Ferdinand left Nürnberg on 16 February; Planitz 371.

next day and did not propose to attend the diet any further except to take leave. I therefore set to work immediately, and that same night asked friends of mine who now preside at the diet to take pains to see that we got what we wanted. I entrusted the whole affair to the chancellor, as they call him, of the imperial administration, a man no less well disposed to you than he is to me, and I also handed over to him the letter you wrote to Ferdinand some time ago.[24] Oecolampadius had given it to me[25] on the understanding that I would not entrust it to anyone except your friend Spiegel;[26] but as there was no sign of him, and Ferdinand was already preparing to depart, I did not like to keep it any longer. And so the chancellor, Ulrich Varnbüler[27] or, as you call him in one of your letters, Brackenbury,[28] immediately presented your letter to Ferdinand as he was on his way to the diet, explaining at the same time what it was we asked for and showing him copies of the books. The prince seized your letter eagerly and read it, and immediately granted your request. But since the matter is not entirely in his own hands, given the opportunity he laid it before the princes himself, with some complimentary remarks about you. All of them equally, including the delegates, decided to comply with Erasmus' request, although the business was held up to some extent by the views of those who thought that the privilege, as they call it, ought not to apply to all your books but only to those of which you had submitted copies. But the chancellor took trouble and your friends helped, and we secured a general privilege.

Ferdinand told Ulrich of his own accord to get the letter[29] ready before he left so that he could sign it in his own hand. So, although overwhelmed with a mass of business, he obeyed and polished off the whole business before Ferdinand's departure – and free, what is more, and no money passing, a very great rarity in these parts – not so much for my sake as for yours. So if things have gone as you wish, well and good, for I am ready at all times and places to do what I can for you, and am not less anxious to oblige Froben, because he does so much for the common cause of learning and is an

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[24] Ep 1323

[25] This seems to imply that Oecolampadius (Ep 1258 n4) had visited Nürnberg early in February, bearing Ep 1341. There is no trace of such a visit in Oecolampadius' surviving letters.

[26] Ep 1323:34ff

[27] Ulrich Varnbüler of St Gallen (1474–1545), since 1507 protonotary in the chancellery of the *Reichskammergericht* and since 1521 chancellor (ie, secretary) to the *Reichsregiment*

[28] *Varn* (or *Farn*) 'fern' or 'bracken' plus *Bühel* (*Hügel*) 'hill' or 'bury.' Cf Ep 867:39.

[29] Ie, the privilege, dated 14 February, which was printed at the beginning of Beatus Rhenanus' *Autores historiae ecclesiasticae* (Basel: Froben, August 1523). Ep 1343 followed on the fifteenth.

excellent man. But you will do the right thing if you write Ulrich at least a short letter of thanks and send him a copy in Froben's name in return for his good will. For a document of this kind, especially one in general terms, could not have been secured without twenty gold pieces.

For the rest, I would gladly poke a little fun at you for relying on certain persons who made you worthless promises,[30] and not being ready to entrust the whole affair to me. For indeed if they had been present in person, they still would have needed my assistance. Ferdinand's secretaries do not carry the same weight with him that Maximilian's used to, and so your business came very close to being overlooked. And if you wish to reply that you did not want to trouble me, especially as you had a man who could put the job through admirably, I do not accept that as an excuse; for that man let you down, and on my side hardly anything more agreeable could happen to me than to do something to please you and show my feelings for you in action rather than words. I therefore send you back your letter to him;[31] and I dare say he will have a perfectly good excuse.

I send also a letter to you from the legate[32] and a certain number of others, and I sent your letter[33] straight to him. He made no reply because he was preparing for his journey and he did not dare leave except in company with Ferdinand; so much has he exposed himself to danger and public insult. He bears an answer from the princes to the pope such as perhaps no man ever carried before,[34] though some of the bishops were against it. It is written in courteous language, but it is so sharp that anything more severe has scarcely ever been heard. Attached to it is a list of grievances of the German nation, some seventy in number or a little more,[35] which our people say they neither can nor will endure any longer; they think that up to now they have had enough of words without deeds, and that now if ever is the time to open their eyes. Where all this will lead, you must consider for yourself.

But I must restrain my pen; for what else could I do at this season of carnival?[36] And so farewell, my dear Erasmus, and remember that I am ever yours; for that is how I think of you.

Nürnberg, 17 February 1523

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[30] Spiegel (Ep 1323)

[31] Not extant

[32] Not extant; presumably written before the receipt of Ep 1336

[33] Ep 1336

[34] Dated 5 February 1523. See RTA III 435–43 (text), 417–35, 443–7 (related documents).

[35] There were seventy-four; RTA III 645–88.

[36] 17 February 1523 was Shrove Tuesday.

1345 / To Herman Lethmaet

Basel, 21 February 1522/3

On Lethmaet, see Ep 1320, to which this is Erasmus' reply. According to Allen Ep 1383:17–21, this letter was circulating in print in August 1523, though Allen could find no copy extant. Erasmus, for obvious reasons (lines 46–7), never published it. The first known printing is an inaccurate text in Theodor J. van Almeloveen's *Amoenitates theologico-philologicae* (Amsterdam 1694). Allen's version is based on the autograph found in the Librije (Town Library) at Gouda (MS 959). The correct year-date is established by the reference to Ep 1324 (lines 17–19).

Lethmaet's response is Ep 1350.

Greeting. I had dedicated my Hilary to your Maecenas[1] already before your letter invited me to do so. I had intended it at first for the king of France; but though against the advice of my friends I changed my mind, on account of these upheavals in the state of things[2] which are so intensely adverse to all humane studies and to which I foresee no end unless there should arise some god from the machine. And so I should be readier to congratulate you on a post at court if times were more peaceful. It is like your unselfish nature to say you are grateful to me, but it is you who secure your own promotion by your admirable qualities; and I am sure that you will use them to promote in turn the cause of Christ, to whom we owe everything. For you seem to me most fortunate on many counts, were you to steer your course with prudence for the future, as I know you will without any outside advice. I only wish I could do something to promote your interests. I shall at least lose no opportunity. You speak of a mission to England, but I suppose with things in such great confusion nothing will come of it. If anything should emerge, however, I will give you a share in all my friends.

The Roman pontiff has put his feelings towards me on record in a long diploma full of good will, which was written for the most part from his own dictation;[3] so Barbier tells me in a letter.[4] He also offers me a fairly distinguished deanery.[5] In my next letter to him I will mention your name.[6]

You need no advice from me. Above all things you should secure a position carrying some authority, to make men take you seriously; such is

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1345

[1] Ep 1334

[2] The Hapsburg-Valois wars (Ep 1283 n3); see Ep 1342:590–649.

[3] Ep 1324

[4] Cf Epp 1341 n9, 1342:698–704.

[5] See Ep 1324 n13.

[6] Perhaps in the missing portion of Ep 1352

the spirit of the age. I have written a humorous letter on the way to live at court,[7] which introduces, however, more serious things; you will find it in my book on the theory of letter-writing. I know you will see to it that on all occasions you remain sober at a drinking-party; this will do much to earn you respect. The desire for distinction, even if you somehow find it tempting, must be completely kept under, equally in the way you dress and how you speak. The court is quick on the scent. In discussion be very careful never to get heated in scholastic fashion; and you should not enter into a dispute on every occasion or with everyone that offers or on any and every subject. You will thus be more highly thought of and will save yourself a lot of trouble. One should cultivate persons in high places, and those especially who have most influence. It is desirable to be polite to everyone, but not servile; remember the dignity proper to a theologian – but no hauteur. An air of piety too is well received. On business of the court you should not be too outspoken, and should not say forthwith what you think; and if you express an opinion, it should be fair and do as little harm to anyone as possible. Should you be obliged to join a party, always choose the more successful side. As for Luther's business, meddle with it as little as possible, if you can; and if you have to act, always remember to be fair. Be a bold champion of the ancient tongues and liberal studies generally, for Hulst and Baechem[8] persecute them worse than they do Luther. This will win you many friends and particularly among the generation now coming on. The present storm simply cannot last for long. Farewell.

I have written this with some freedom as you told me to; put it in the fire if you like, for I have kept no copy.

Basel, 21 February 1522

Sincerely yours, Erasmus

I was not sure about the archbishop's family[9] or I should have said more about it in my preface. I wasn't certain whether it was his father or grandfather who was chancellor, and no one here could even tell me his name. Farewell once more.

To the excellent theologian Herman Lethmaet of Gouda, in the imperial household

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[7] Printed in *De conscribendis epistolis* (ASD I-2 499–502 / CWE 25 195–7).

[8] Frans van der Hulst was a lay jurist who in April 1522 had been named head of the Netherlands Inquisition (see Ep 1299 n22). Baechem (Ep 1254 n6) was one of his close collaborators. Hulst's indiscriminate zeal brought discredit and dismissal after about two years in office.

[9] See Ep 1334 n103.

1346 / To the Nuns of Cologne [Basel, c February] 1523

This letter comprises the opening and closing passages of the *Virginis et martyris comparatio,* written at the request of a convent of Benedictine nuns in Cologne with whose warden, Helias Marcaeus (Ep 842), Erasmus was on friendly terms (cf Ep 1341A: 785–6). The *Comparatio* was first published in 1523 with a new edition of the *Ratio verae theologiae* (Ep 1365). A second, much expanded version, prepared at Marcaeus' request, was published in September 1524 with the *De immensa Dei misericordia concio* (Ep 1475).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE VENERABLE
COMMUNITY OF MACCHABEITE NUNS IN THE CITY OF COLOGNE,
GREETING IN CHRIST JESUS, WHO IS THE VIRGIN'S SON
AND THE CROWN OF ALL VIRGINS

More than once, most estimable virgin sisters, devoted as you are to your profession, you have sent me titbits and sweetmeats to induce me to write something in praise of the greatest treasure[1] you possess and make you proud of your chosen way of life. You intend of course to make something out of it. You have a target: in exchange for presents which beguile the sense of taste, you hope to get something which will feed the mind. A virtuous ambition this, a holy appetite, a prudent and profitable kind of exchange full worthy of wise virgins, if only I were a man with the ability to reward you with a spiritual harvest for the corporal seed that you have sown. Your predilection is admirable; your selection is at fault. You set your heart on the best; you do not set your hand on one capable of answering to your pious wishes. But let me not be thought merely ungrateful. I congratulate you, O saintly virgins, on this spirit that thirsts for nothing save the glory of your bridegroom ...

Acknowledge then your own felicity, O virgin sisters, and you will not envy this world its attractions; acknowledge your exalted station, and you will not hanker for this world's sordid society. Cleave to your bridegroom, for in him you have at once all that is joyful and splendid. Take courage to persevere from the example in your own home set by those saintly young men, whose joy is greater because the relics of their earthly bodies are preserved in such a holy society. They chose to die rather than eat the flesh of swine; and you too must treat as swine's flesh everything that is not pleasing to your bridegroom. If you have tried to emulate the noble fight

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1346

[1] The relics of the Maccabees, then housed in the convent, now found in St Anthony's church, Cologne

they fought, you will be also partakers of their glory, with the aid of Jesus your bridegroom, who liveth and reigneth for ever and ever. Amen

In the year of the life-giving Incarnation 1523

1347 / To Joost Vroye Basel, 1 March [1523]

This letter, first printed with the *Exomologesis* (1524) and thereafter in all editions of the *Epistolae*, is also found in MS 1324 in the Librije (Town Library) at Gouda. Allen assigned priority to the manuscript despite his suspicion that it had been copied from the *Exomologesis*. All the sources give 1524 as the year-date. Allen, however, assigned the letter, in its original form, to the year 1523. His argument was as follows. The date of Jan de Neve's death, as established by Professor de Vocht (*Mélanges Charles Moeller* [Louvain 1914]), was 25 November 1522. It is hardly likely that Erasmus would have waited until 1 March 1524 to write so moving a lament on the death of a friend. There is, moreover, nothing in the letter to imply a date later than March 1523 save the solitary reference to Hutten (line 325), where the apparent implication is that he was already dead. This may well have been an interpolation at the time of printing, a supposition supported by the statement further on (lines 331–2) that Neve's death was the most recent of all. Finally, the echo, in the opening passage of Ep 1355, of the opening lines of this letter, indicates that Ep 1355 may have been Vroye's reply, though the business portion of that letter has no counterpart here. Thus the year-date can be set at 1523 on the assumption that Erasmus revised and amplified the letter for publication, eliminating any business matter as irrelevant to what had become a literary composition. In the *Catalogus lucubrationum* (Ep 1341A:1571), this letter is listed, under the title *De morte subita*, among the 'works which contribute to the building of character.'

Joost Vroye of Gavere (d 1533) was a priest and an old friend of Erasmus (Ep 717:22). After taking his MA at Louvain in 1505, Vroye studied law while teaching languages, logic, and physics at the College of the Lily. He became a doctor of both laws in 1520 and subsequently held chairs of civil (1524) and canon law (1526). He was rector in 1521 and 1529, and held other administrative and honorific posts in the university as well. This letter and Ep 1355 are all that survive of the correspondence between Erasmus and Vroye.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOOST VAN GAVERE,
A MAN OF WIDE LEARNING OUTSIDE HIS PROFESSION OF
THE LAW, GREETING

The news of the death of our common friend Jan de Neve[1] was a deep grief to

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1347

[1] Ep 298 introduction

me, but it was also a salutary warning. I cannot fail to feel very severely the loss of such a special friend, particularly since in himself he had many claims on a long span of life. And again a death so sudden warns us all that no man should wish to live in a state in which he would not wish to die. From my friend's letters I gather that he had a cheerful and agreeable supper with some friends and then, as he went upstairs – those stairs I have so often climbed myself, for he had moved into my rooms[2] – he had a sudden seizure about ten o'clock and survived this attack only six hours. However, his death should perhaps not be considered sudden, since he had for so many years been faced with paralysis. And in my view he was too much given to physic, in which he himself was not unskilled. Is there in fact any department of liberal knowledge in which he had not acquired some experience to very good purpose? Such was his natural versatility.

And so in conversation I sometimes launch against him a favourite quip, that Neve's gifts are very badly housed. That intellect of his was indeed worthy of a happier dwelling-place. And again his mind was of a quality that should not be infected by the humbler cares of life; yet once he was entangled he could not shake himself free. How happy was his choice of language, how fresh and ready his flow of words, if he had to speak on a serious subject! What charm, what quickness if he had chosen a lighter vein of wit and humour! And then his character: how ready he was to think well of everyone, how delightful in society, what a good friend, how incapable of betraying a secret, how free from selfishness! I had one fault to find in him, for even Neve was not without a blemish: he would keep up a disagreement longer than I thought desirable.[3] He did not easily fall out with anyone, but when he did it was hard to make him give up his resentment. This was the one point on which, in close agreement as we were, he and I sometimes had, as you know, a difference of opinion. I could not make him understand how often a serious dispute could be dissolved by a kind word, and how much truth there is in the Greek proverb 'Many the friendships silence hath dissolved.'[4]

I used often to remind him of an anecdote about John Colet,[5] a man who deserves never to be forgotten. He got on very badly with his uncle, a man of great age and very difficult character. The subject of the dispute was no goat's wool or donkey's shadow, as the phrase goes,[6] but a great sum of

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[2] On the upper floor of the College of the Lily

[3] See Epp 696, 838.

[4] *Adagia* II i 26

[5] Ep 106. Judging by the reference (line 43) to the *Enchiridion* (Ep 164), this episode can be dated no earlier than Erasmus' second visit to England, 1505–6.

[6] *Adagia* I iii 52–3

money, so great that it might well induce a son to declare war on his father. Colet was on his way to dine with that revered figure William, archbishop of Canterbury,[7] and took me with him in the boat. On the way he was reading the pages in my *Enchiridion* that suggest a remedy for anger, but did not tell me why he was doing so. The arrangement at table when we sat down meant, as it happened, that Colet sat opposite his uncle, with a long face, saying nothing and eating nothing. Now the archbishop is exceptionally clever in the way he ensures that no one at his table is not enjoying himself, and matches his remarks to the mood of every individual. He therefore started a conversation on the comparison between the various stages of life, and those two, who had said nothing, began talking. At length the uncle began to boast, as old men will, of the bodily vigour he retained in spite of his years. After dinner they had a separate discussion between themselves on some subject I know not what. When Colet and I had returned to our boat, 'Erasmus,' he said, 'I see you are a lucky man.' I expressed surprise that he should call a most unlucky man[8] lucky; and he then told me how passionately hostile he was to his uncle, so much so that he had almost decided to break the rules of Christian moderation, ignore the ties of kinship, and openly declare war on him. That was why he had chosen to read my *Enchiridion* in search of a remedy for anger, and he had been successful. It was not long before that brief conversation started at the dinner-table led to a lessening of the bitterness on both sides, with the result that very soon the whole business between them was settled, the archbishop having acted as go-between. I used to recall such precedents as this in talking with him,[9] and I never did much good. But think of the outstanding qualities by which he made up for this one constitutional defect!

I will not continue at this point, my dear Joost, to console a man of your wisdom and your wide reading for the loss of a friend. You knew that he was mortal while you had him, like the pagan in the story who said of his son, 'I knew I had not begotten an immortal';[10] and a man seems to me a stranger to all philosophy who thinks it a sadder business for one who has been born to die than for one who must die to be born at all, since both alike accord with the nature of man. But it is strange to recount the abhorrence with which ordinary people regard sudden death, to such an extent that there is nothing they pray God and the saints to deliver them from more frequently or with

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[7] Warham (Ep 188)

[8] Allen's note to Ep 1102:6 provides a long list of passages documenting Erasmus' conception of himself as habitually unfortunate.

[9] Neve

[10] Anaxagoras; see Valerius Maximus 5.10 ext 3.

more feeling than from death sudden and unforeseen. To die suddenly is common to good men and bad alike. Herod suddenly perished when smitten by an angel.[11] Eli the high priest, who was a good old man, died by a fall from his chair.[12] The dreadful thing is not to die suddenly but to die the death of the wicked. And this superstitious fear that mortals have invents for itself vain remedies, an image of St Christopher, some particular brief prayers to the blessed Virgin, certain words and signs akin to those used in magic. How much better it would be if those who are so much frightened of sudden death were to pray heaven for a good life! What could be more foolish than to postpone amendment of life until one's deathbed! And how few people are made better by a long illness! – if indeed anybody ever is.

One should never despair of anybody; but all the same he learns very late to be a Christian who can no longer practise what he learns, and is very late in applying the remedy of confession when his soul hovers already on his lips. 'Grant me,' they pray, 'true repentance and a pure confession before my death.' And this prayer they address sometimes to St Barbara or St Erasmus. I ask you, what else does this request amount to except 'Let me live in sin and kindly arrange for me to die in sanctity.' They are reluctant to hate what they have done wrong except in the hour of death; they wish to enjoy their sins as long as they enjoy good health. If it were not so, they would say to Christ and not to St Barbara, 'Grant me now hatred of all my sins, grant me for what I have done wrong the sorrow that brings salvation, grant that remembrance of my former wrongs may always be bitter to me, grant me while I am in good health a confession made once and for all that will make confession in future unnecessary.' Some even tell God in detail in their prayers by what kind of death they would like to die and how many months they should spend in bed. How much more Christian it is to take thought for nothing all the time except so to arrange one's life that whenever that last day comes upon us it should never overwhelm us unprepared, and leave the rest to the discretion of Almighty God! God knows what is best for each of us. We are all born in the same way, but there are many different ways of dying. Let him choose for us whatever he will. No one can die badly who has lived well. And were it lawful for a religious man to choose the manner of his death, none would I think be more desirable than a sudden death to carry one off quickly heavenward in the middle, as it were, of a career of virtuous acts. When one is sick already and willy-nilly the slave of one's bodily ills, how much time is lost to one's religious duties! No studying, no teaching, no preaching, no visiting of the sick, no labouring

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[11] Acts 12:23

[12] 1 Sam 4:18

with one's hands to obtain the wherewithal to help a brother in need; no, one is more likely all the time to be a burden to others whom charity would not wish to impose upon.

They say that Dietrich,[13] that Franciscan who died in Louvain and was, as you know, esteemed as a religious, honourable man, when he felt a burden of bodily weakness that he foresaw would lead to his death, used to express the wish among his brethren that God when he thought fit might take him hence suddenly, for fear a long illness might make him a burden to his brethren. So anxious is a good man to be no trouble to anyone in life that even in death he hopes not to be a burden. It happened as he had desired. On the day of his death he had preached twice, said mass, and assisted at the solemn liturgy. He sat down to dinner, and near the end of dinner asked permission to leave, saying he felt slightly sick. He went by himself to his cell, and they thought he was resting. When he did not appear for some time the brethren went in and found him lying on his bed fully clothed, dead, but with the air of one asleep. Who would not call such a death more blessed than a long illness?

'But there are no ceremonies, no holy water, no holy candle, no chrism, no sign of the cross, no crowd of mourners racked with sobs perhaps.' I will not observe at this point that these things sometimes do nothing but make death twice as disagreeable; I will merely reply that it was in such conditions that the eunuch of queen Candace was baptized.[14] It must have been much the same, I suppose, for those baptized by the Apostle Paul. Is baptism in our day a more blessed thing because performed with so many ceremonies? It is a wretched thing, they say, to die a solitary death. And yet the dead man is content if he has one angel to catch his poor parting soul and carry it to heaven. At the bedside there are sometimes those who can be a comfort to the dying man, but more often those who add to his grief and his despair: ill-tempered wife, disobedient children, companions from the gaming-table, the alehouse, or the brothel, a concubine, an enemy who has ruined him.

You know that councillor of Mechelen who was a friend and

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[13] Dietrich Kolde (Coelde, Dietrich von Münster), ca 1435–1515, of Münster in Westphalia. He studied in Cologne as an Augustinian Friar, but by 1479 he had become a Franciscan Observant, spending much of his career in the houses of that order in the Low Countries and gaining great fame as a preacher throughout the Rhineland and Westphalia. During an outbreak of the plague in Brussels in 1489 he selflessly tended the sick and the bereaved. Erasmus met him in Bergen around 1493 and admired him for the qualities described here and in Allen Ep 2700:124–50.

[14] Acts 8:36–8

contemporary of Bogardus[15] the physician; for both of them lived to an advanced age, and the Gronsellus[16] I speak of was even some years older, as I learned from their conversation. I stayed with him once in Mechelen. I learned there from his sons that when he had already taken to his bed (for he died from old age rather than sickness) he told the relatives who were proposing to sit up with him to go to bed. 'There is no need,' he said, 'for anyone to put themselves out for my benefit. I can easily die by myself if need be, for I am ready to go whenever God shall call me.' Those were words really worthy of a Christian.

When I was living in Rome[17] they told a story of a certain man from Saxony[18] who had arrived with several friends on pilgrimage. When he rose and left the confessional of the priest before whom he had unburdened his conscience, he knelt down before a neighbouring altar leaning on his staff, and clasped his hands forcibly together and prayed. His companions, being ready to leave, wondered why he spent so long in prayer, and when he showed no sign of ending they plucked him by the sleeve to tell him it was time to go. They found him dead, but exactly like a man in prayer. Physicians also tell us that sudden and violent emotional changes can produce death, as happened, they say, to a woman prostrated with grief because she believed a false report that her son had been killed in battle; when her son, who had survived unexpectedly, entered the house, she died on the spot. The same thing must have happened to the man I spoke of. First he had suffered intense remorse for what he had done wrong; then followed intense joy from confidence in his absolution; and hence his sudden death. 'He died,' they say, 'with no light, no cross, no God.' But who would not wish such a death as far the happiest?

None of the apostles or of those early disciples who were dear to Christ above all other men died, we are told, of disease; all met a violent death, as their lord, Christ himself, had done. And I for my part think that this kind of death was granted them as a great privilege. Their whole life was spent upon the gospel; their death of itself offered the greatest glory and the minimum of torment. What could be more joyful and less to be lamented than a martyr's death? And then how many diseases there are which are greater torment than rods and hooks, than axe and cross! How many years of torture do men suffer from the gout, from excoriation of the kidneys and the bladder, from my own executioner the stone![19] What cross can be compared with the agonies of pleurisy? The law, at its most cruel, cuts a man alive into four pieces before reaching his vital parts. But I believe a man would feel less agony who was cut in pieces limb by limb than him who feels the fury of the stone beneath his lower ribs and around what physicians call the mesaraic veins – although the physicians of antiquity among the extreme forms of anguish which bring sudden death assign the first place to calculus of the bladder, which is perhaps more cruel for this reason that it is practically untreatable (unless one can accept a remedy more cruel than death which often means death itself). Next to this anyhow is calculus of the kidneys when at its most painful. I for my part find it returns so often, and it attacks me with such deadly force, that my worst enemy might rightly cease to hate me, his hatred satisfied by such misfortunes. In fact so pitiless is the torment caused by the stone that it sometimes kills the most robust and vigorous body within three days; and if the pain lets up it does so simply that it may return with greater violence. What else is this except to taste death over again ever so often, and who would wish to be restored to life in order soon to die once more?

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[15] Possibly Jacob Bogaert (d 1520), professor of medicine at Louvain, who entered holy orders after the death of his wife

[16] Perhaps Gerard van Gronsselt (d 1514), who may have been the son of Jan van Gronsselt, professor of law at Louvain (d 1463)

[17] Spring and summer of 1509; see Ep 216 introduction.

[18] Unidentified

Thus it is that great authorities not without reason have regarded sudden death as life's greatest piece of good fortune. Many examples of this are recorded by Pliny in his seventh book, chapter 53, and many more are supplied by the experience of daily life. Although among these they seem more fortunate who suddenly breathed their last from overwhelming joy. Yet the most fortunate of all are those who after many years of happiness met their end suddenly while engaged on some equally enjoyable and honourable employment; we have all heard, for example, how death has come suddenly to many people while saying mass or preaching or deep in the contemplation of heavenly things. Some think a well-spent life is happier than a long one; others again count length of life among the greatest blessings. I cannot count myself among the fortunate, for I suppose that scarcely any living man owes less to fortune;[20] although a great part of my troubles, to speak frankly, I owe to my own thoughtlessness. But of the length of my life I cannot complain, for I am now not far from my sixtieth year. Had such a length of life been promised me by some astrologer or palmist when I was young, I should never have believed him. And then too I feel myself fairly long-lived when I compare myself with those who lived for fewer years. I die before my time if I were to compare myself with St Jerome or with Varro, who was in his eightieth year when he wrote his work on agriculture, and wrote it with such spirit that after the labour of it he seems still to have been active in mind and to have taken delight in literary work. I compare myself for preference with those who, far more learned as they were than I am, lived for proportionately fewer years. I will not mention such cases as Lucan and Persius.[21] Virgil died in his fifty-first year; Ovid was not much older;[22] Cicero in his sixty-fourth. Even these men of genius I number among mortal men.

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[19] See Ep 1267 n5.

[20] See n8 above.

But examples nearer our own time move us more strongly. Lorenzo Valla I would put among those who have earned undying fame among posterity; he seems to have died before he reached old age.[23] Ermolao Barbaro, least barbarous of men, reached a fair age, but died long before his time came to decay.[24] Pico della Mirandola, Angelo Poliziano (what glories of their generation!) perished while still in the flower of their age.[25] Survey the records of antiquity, and you will find many men of literary fame who lived to a great age; but within living memory you would discover very few, whether the reason for this is that the world itself is growing old or that nowadays a man must spend more of himself to acquire learning.

I come now to those whom I had the good fortune to see for myself not many years ago. When I first went to Italy Filippo Beroaldo of Bologna was already dead.[26] He was then very famous and warmly remembered; and yet when he died he was younger than I am now.[27] His kinsman,[28] who recalled him by the same Christian name and surname, I saw in Rome, a young man of the highest character and in literary gifts and learning not inferior to the elder Beroaldo and in many men's judgment (I too thought so myself) even superior. He was still young when fate snatched him away.

In Bologna for the first time I saw Scipione Fortiguerra,[29] a man of recondite and universal learning but so far from ostentation that unless you

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[21] Roman poets of the first century. Lucan died at twenty-five and Persius at twenty-seven.

[22] Ovid died in his sixtieth year.

[23] Ep 20:100n. Valla was about fifty-one when he died.

[24] Ep 126:150n. He scarcely reached forty.

[25] Pico (Ep 126:150n) died at thirty-one and Poliziano (Ep 61:154n) at forty.

[26] Filippo Beroaldo the Elder (Ep 256:149n), who died in 1504 at age fifty-two.

[27] By Erasmus' own reckoning in the *Compendium vitae* (CWE 4 403:4) he would have been fifty-six at this time.

[28] Filippo Beroaldo the Younger (1472–1518) was a nephew of the elder Beroaldo. He taught at Bologna from 1499 to 1502, entered papal service under Julius II, and was appointed Vatican librarian by Leo X.

[29] See Ep 217:4n. He was nearly fifty when he died, not forty-two as Erasmus here states (line 247).

drew him on you might have sworn he was illiterate. I got to know him better afterwards in Rome. He too died when he was not much more than forty-two years old.

In Padua I saw no famous men (I speak only of the dead) except Raffaele Regio,[30] a man far advanced in years but 'fresh and green was his old age.'[31] He was then I suppose not less than seventy, and yet no winter was so severe that he did not attend at seven o'clock in the morning the Greek lectures of Marcus Musurus,[32] who gave public lectures all round the year with scarcely four days holiday. The young men could not face the rigours of winter; but neither embarrassment nor winter kept that old man from the lecture-room.

Musurus died before reaching old age, after he had begun to be an archbishop by the favour of Pope Leo.[33] He was a Greek in origin, in fact a Cretan, but such a good Latin scholar that it was quite extraordinary; few other Greeks had this gift except Theodorus Gaza[34] and Janus Lascaris,[35] who is still alive. And then for the whole of philosophy he had something more than the greatest enthusiasm; he was a man born for the highest things, had life been granted him. One day when I was to take supper with him, and his little old father was there, who knew not a word of anything but Greek, when it came to washing our hands, each of us made way for the other as always happens; so to put an end to this pointless waste of time I seized his father's hand and said in Greek, 'We're the two old men.' The old man was perfectly delighted, and he and I washed our hands together; although at that time I was not much older than Musurus.[36] Musurus, however, put his arm round Zacharias,[37] a young man who was a very good scholar, and said, also in Greek, 'And we're the two young ones.'

In Venice I saw Paolo Canal,[38] a patrician, a young man born for very great things had not death deprived the world of all those gifts. He died of consumption while I was still there. My host Aldo Manuzio died many years later, when he was not much less than seventy but wonderfully youthful in spirit in the field of literature.[39] Pietro Cotta[40] I only saw one day at dinner and heard him talking; he was then in the flower of his age, a modest man and an equally good scholar.

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[30] Ep 450:22n. He lived to be about eighty.

[31] Virgil *Aeneid* 6.304

[32] Epp 223:5n, 574 introduction

[33] Musurus became archbishop of Monemvasia on 13 June 1516 (Ep 556:18n) and died on 9 August 1517 (Ep 729:60n), at about age forty-seven.

[34] See Ep 1341A n63.

[35] Ep 269:55n

[36] The incident would have taken place in 1508, during Erasmus' residence in Venice. Musurus was about thirty-eight at the time, Erasmus forty-one.

[37] Possibly Zacharius Calliergis (d 1524) of Crete, famous as a printer at Venice 1499–1500 and 1509, and at Rome 1515–23

[38] Paolo Canal of Venice (c 1481–1508), an accomplished Greek scholar and member of the circle around the publisher Aldo Manuzio. Erasmus and Canal probably met in the winter of 1507–8, during the first months of Erasmus'

In Rome I saw Pietro Marso,[41] who was aged rather than famous, for he was not far from eighty and was vigorous in mind and reasonably fit in body. He struck me as an honourable and upright man, and I could not fail to admire his industry; at that advanced age he was writing notes on *De senectute* and other works by Cicero. It was possible to detect in him some traces of an older generation. In Rome I also got to know and made friends with Petrus Phaedrus,[42] who really won more fame with tongue than with pen, for he was a wonderfully copious and effective speaker. It is a great step on the road to success to have made one's name in Rome. He first became known thanks to the *Hippolytus*, that tragedy of Seneca, in which he took the part of Phaedra, in the piazza in front of the palace of Cardinal Raffaele of San Giorgio.[43] So I was told by the cardinal himself, and that was how he got the nickname of Phaedrus. He was under fifty, I think, when he died, having earned the name of the Cicero of his generation. Girolamo Donato[44] I saw on one occasion only, and had no later opportunity of meeting him. He

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sojourn in Venice. Deeply interested in religious renewal as well as scholarship, Canal became a Camaldolese monk just three weeks before his death on 16 May 1508. Erasmus lamented his passing in *Adagia* II iii 48 (LB II 502A).

[39] Ep 207 introduction. He died at about sixty-six.

[40] Giovanni Cotta of Verona (c 1483–1509 or 1510), whom Erasmus incorrectly calls 'Pietro.' Both poet and mathematician, he became in 1503 the private secretary of the Venetian condottiere Bartolomeo d'Alviano. The dinner at which he and Erasmus had their only encounter probably took place in July 1508, during the celebration of d'Alviano's recent victory over the forces of Emperor Maximilian.

[41] Ep 152:23n

[42] Erasmus once again (cf n40) has the first name wrong. The reference is to Tommaso Inghirami, called Phaedrus, of Volterra (1470–1516), a learned ecclesiastic who spent his career at the curia in Rome. Famous as a preacher, he was by 1515 librarian of the Vatican and served as secretary to the Lateran Council in 1512. He died of a fall from his mule.

[43] Ep 333 introduction

[44] Donato (c 1457–1511), a Venetian diplomat who was an accomplished scholar and theologian as well. He translated a number of Greek patristic works and wrote treatises in defence of Roman doctrine against the Greeks.

was an old man but in excellent health,[45] fitted by his exceptional versatility not only for scholarship but for the performance of all sorts of public duties.

Britain is a far cry from Italy, but stands next it in the value of its learned men. How many of the circle of my old friends I have now lost! First Andrea Ammonio of Lucca,[46] a man, heaven knows, of great versatility, with a wonderful memory, and with all that lofty spirit so free from jealousy, so devoid of selfishness. Rising by his natural gifts and by the unbroken approval of princes, and destined for great things, he was carried off by sudden death when he was not yet forty. I for my part cannot refrain from grieving for his death as often as I remember how delightful I found his society. Of the same group was also Johannes Sixtinus from Friesland,[47] who died not long after him but was older than he. Even so, in body he might have lived to be as old as Nestor[48] had not some severe illness overtaken him; his mind was active in all fields and his memory prompt and tenacious. Besides the knowledge of canon and civil law which was his standby he had tried his hand successfully at every branch of knowledge. They were followed by John Colet,[49] dean of the cathedral church in London, who died perhaps in his fifty-third year. Of his outstanding gifts I need say nothing, for I have given an adequate picture of him in my letters,[50] and taken from life, for I knew the man intimately for many years. Not long after him we lost William Grocyn,[51] who to a professional knowledge of theology added a competence in every branch of learning that was precise to the edge of pedantry. Yet though he lived to a considerable age he left nothing behind him in writing.[52] After a stroke of paralysis he outlived his faculties for something like a year.

Of my German friends I have to mourn none but Johann Reuchlin,[53] who died in a flourishing old age that yet was not too much prolonged. In fact he might have been able to continue down to this day the support he so long gave to the public cause of learning, had it not pleased heaven to create certain creatures which do nothing but harm. The ox ploughs, the horse carries a man, and the sheep feeds him; of what value are hornets, gnats,

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[45] Donato was about fifty-two when Erasmus was in Rome (1509).
[46] See Epp 218, 623–4.
[47] Ep 112
[48] Nestor, king of Pylos, ruled over three generations of men; *Adagia* I vi 66.
[49] Ep 106
[50] Ep 1211
[51] Ep 118:26n
[52] See Ep 540:88–104.
[53] Epp 290, 1311 n15

vipers, and venomous beetles?[54] On top of them there is the general catastrophe of war.[55] Would that it were possible to add Hutten to my list![56]

And now I have finished my circle and return to Louvain. There I enjoyed for three days the society of Christophe de Longueil,[57] a native of Brabant (for he was born, they say, in Mechelen). He died recently in Venice[58] at the age of about thirty. A young man made for humane studies, in which his schooling was precocious and successful, he would have made a name for himself had he been allowed to live. And now last of all we have lost Neve.

This is how soldiers tell over again the campaigns of famous generals and from such precedents form for themselves a picture of what might happen. And so we remain – remain, did I say? For my part, if I may speak of myself, I have as they say outlived my vital thread,[59] happy could I but grow young again and keep the memory of all I have experienced. But this is a wish vain as the wind (I gladly use the Homeric phrase),[60] and does not torment me in the least. I follow willingly the way I am summoned to take by the common course of nature. On the length of my life I have no complaints. I have had more than I hoped for, although I might have rested for some years basking in the kindness of the friends whom the toil I put into my books has won for me in such numbers all the world over, had I not, like the mouse in the Greek proverb that fell into the pitch,[61] been born into this tragic generation. The less felicity has fallen to my lot here, the greater my confidence that it will be better for me in another world. But if I have been unsuccessful, this has meant more to me than to other people. Some men are born for themselves and for themselves they live. A nuisance to everyone else, they keep their felicity to themselves, and do nothing to please other people except by dying. Even then they have not lost their readiness to be a

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[54] Reuchlin's critics, especially Johann Pfefferkorn; see Ep 703:12–15, and cf Ep 694:28–9, 88–90, 105.

[55] See Ep 986:52–9, 68–72.

[56] If the assumption is correct that this sentence was inserted at the time of printing in 1524 (see the introduction to this letter), after Hutten's death in August 1523, then Erasmus is saying that because of his bitter feud with Hutten (Epp 1331 n24, 1341A:1020–1191) the latter could no longer be numbered among his German friends.

[57] Ep 914. The three-day visit with Erasmus took place in mid-October 1519; Epp 1026:5–6, 1029:29.

[58] Actually in Bologna, as Erasmus later reported in Allen Epp 1597:17 and 1603:108

[59] Cf *Adagia* I vi 67.

[60] *Iliad* 4.355; cf *Adagia* III vii 21.

[61] Theocritus 14.51; cf *Adagia* II iii 68.

nuisance: they burden posterity with memorial rites and prayer and sacrifice and ceremonies and vestments and the ringing of bells, so that even after death they are a trouble to the living. Personally I would rather be a Hercules and die amid my labours.

As for the manner of my death, the greatest torture that there is, I console myself with the thought that there is absolutely nothing about it that can affect other people, while milder physical complaints like loss of sight or confused speech can actually be a trouble to anyone you live with. He who is troubled with the stone is the only sufferer, the only man who is at risk. And no torment is so great that human nature cannot bear it once it has grown familiar, particularly with the help of courage. There is nothing womanish about those words of Electra in Euripides:

> There's nothing, so to say, so terrible,
> No suffering, no heaven-sent catastrophe,
> That human nature cannot bear the load.[62]

Indeed, as far as my spirit is concerned, it is not simply that I reckon an evil becomes less severe if one endures with resignation what cannot be avoided; I have to thank the philosophy of the gospel for something more. Once and for all I have put this wretched body of mine into the hands of Christ, just as a sick man in peril of his life puts himself into the hands of the physician for gentle unguents and lotions or to be cut open and cauterized, in confidence that in whatever fashion he may treat this lodging of my soul, his only purpose will be my salvation. I lay down no conditions for him; let him be my saviour and he may do what he pleases. I know that he has no plans except what is best for me.

For the rest, I am almost free from those restraints which do not allow other men to say cheerfully to those who will outlive them 'And so farewell and give us your applause.' Even as a young man I never partook of food and drink except as a kind of medicine, and often regretted that it was not possible to live permanently without them. I was never a slave to venery, and indeed had no time for it under the load of my researches. If I ever had a touch of that trouble, I was set free from that tyrant long ago by advancing years, to which on this account I am most grateful. Ambition I always abhorred, and now slightly regret this; one should accept in the way of office enough to prevent other men from looking down on one. But in those days I could not imagine that such beasts in human shape existed as I now find

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[62] *Orestes* 1–3

existing; and now it is too late to look for honours which I could not support. Age often makes people careful about money. This is a disease which has never yet affected my spirit in the slightest. I wish I could control my expenses in such a way that when I die I may have no money of my own left over and no debts; only what suffices to give my poor body a decent burial somewhere or other. As for the burden of reputation, I should be glad to be quit of it before I am quit of the body; so far am I from a concern for glory, if such a thing as glory really exists. I have no personal ties, such as love of children, parents or kinsfolk, to retain me in this life. I regard with equal affection all who love Christ.

I have had something of a struggle with my spirit to make it adopt a truly Christian feeling towards those who knowingly and willingly and with deliberate spite like yelping curs defame a man who deserves none of it and has even served them well, and who even plan for my destruction. I have achieved this too: not only do I have no thoughts of revenge, I do not even pray that evil may befall them. We find this gentleness even in soldiers when death stares them in the face; how much more ought we to be equipped with this feeling by the gospel philosophy! As it is, I find it something of a struggle to form in my mind a state of perfect confidence in my own salvation, and on this subject I hold frequent debates within myself and sometimes share the problem with learned friends as well. Nor do I get any satisfaction so far either from Lutherans or from anti-Lutherans. And so the wisest course seems to me to be to seek security on this point in every way I can from Christ by prayers and by doing good up to the last day of my life, and then to leave the decision on this point too to him, but with the feeling that just as I have the least possible hope from my own merits, so I have great confidence from his immense love towards us and his most generous promises.

This is the philosophy by which I now live, most learned van Gavere, and I would exhort you to do the same, did I not know that a religious and learned man like yourself must have thought all this out long ago. You blame your indifferent health, and your complaints are justified. Those gifts of yours entirely deserved a better dwelling-place; but mind the trouble is not made much worse by imagining that you are ill. Physicians I approve of, but giving them too much power I do not approve. Be sure to give my greetings to all our old companions, to Jean Desmarez,[63] to Dirk of Aalst,[64] to

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[63] Ep 180

[64] Ie, the printer Dirk Martens (Ep 263:10n)

Jan of Armentières,[65] and to Pieter de Corte,[66] who have taken Neve's place, and besides them to the whole society of the Trilingue.

From Basel, 1 March 152[4] 425

1348 / To [Georgius Spalatinus] Basel, 11 March 1523

The only surviving version of this letter (Hauptstaatsarchiv Weimar Reg N.163) is a German translation in the hand of the Saxon court secretary Georgius Spalatinus (Ep 501), who probably prepared it for submission to Luther's prince, Elector Frederick the Wise of Saxony. The text was first printed in the *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 2 (1878) 130. There seems to be no reason to doubt its authority.

The manuscript contains no specific indication that Spalatinus was the addressee. But his close relationship with both Luther and the elector, his friendly attitude towards Erasmus, and the fact that the manuscript is in his hand make the ascription highly probable. The extremely confidential nature of the remarks on Luther and King Henry explain why Erasmus never published the letter.

Greeting. Between you and me there is no disagreement. Rather, what has happened is pure mischance. Nor has it put our friendship under any form of constraint. At the same time this has done nothing for the gospel cause, which I try to promote in my own fashion according to my abilities more faithfully perhaps than some might think. You and I serve one purpose, but 5

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[65] Jan Heems (d 1560) of Armentières studied at Louvain. By 1521 he had obtained an MA and begun to study medicine. In 1521–2 he shared the regency of the College of the Lily with Jan de Neve, and from November 1522 to November 1525 with Pieter de Corte (see following note). For the remainder of his career he was professor of medicine and continued to serve the university in various administrative posts.

[66] Pieter de Corte (Curtius) of Bruges (1491–1567) studied at Louvain and in 1515 became professor of eloquence at the College of the Lily, where Erasmus lived from 1517 to 1521. From 1522 de Corte was regent of the Lily, at first jointly with Jan Heems (see preceding note), then on his own (1525–45). In 1530, while serving the first of three terms as rector of the university, he was promoted to master of divinity, and the following year became professor of theology. In 1561 he became the first bishop of the newly created see of Bruges. Though a firm defender of Catholic orthodoxy and, later, of the Tridentine reforms, de Corte was also a warm supporter of Erasmus' Christian humanism, a protector of the Collegium Trilingue, and was close to many of Erasmus' good friends in the Netherlands.

what we do is not the same. Would God that Christ may turn it all to serve his glory, for therein lies our salvation!

On Luther's spirit I have never dared pass judgment; but I have often been concerned that the great impression he gives of arrogance and his great audacity in criticizing others may do harm to the gospel, which is so happily gaining strength. What purpose did it serve to use this kind of invective against the king of England,[1] the most religious prince of our generation? Far from me be any suspicion of flattery! I owe him nothing and want nothing from him.[2] He wrote under pressure, and he was convinced that his was a holy cause. It seemed to him that Luther was a most dangerous beast, and he was persuaded by men by whom it is no surprise to find a prince misled. For that he was misled I do admit. If only Luther had considered his intention, which is truly Christian; if only he had from the bottom of his heart forgiven the king's slanderous language, which was not directed against Luther but against the sort of man that, misled as he was, he took Luther to be; if only, without insulting the royal dignity, he had made a vigorous, disinterested reply based on solid arguments, he would neither have aroused so great a prince to be his enemy nor caused so many men to fall away from him.[3] Would God that even now he might learn meekness! But look at the preface in which he lauds Melanchthon's *Annotationes*![4] Was there ever such arrogance?

I am not worried about Luther, but two things concern me greatly. If Luther were to be overthrown, no god and no man would ever again be able to deal with the monks. And second, Luther cannot be made away with without the loss at the same time of a great deal of sincere zeal for the gospel. I have seen a letter he sent to one of his friends attacking me,[5] which is full of bitterness. I do know that there are a number of people who spur him on; but the wisdom of the gospel would have required him not to pass judgment on me or condemn me without first finding out the truth. If I sought only worldly advantage, there is nothing I could desire so much as that he and all his followers should attack me with all the venom at their command. But the

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1348

[1] Ep 1308 n3

[2] Cf Ep 1342 n158.

[3] Cf Ep 1342:870–2.

[4] In his preface (WA X-2 309–10) to Melanchthon's *Annotationes in epistolas Pauli ad Romanos et Corinthios* (1522) Luther praises Melanchthon's work as far superior to that of Aquinas, Jerome, and Origen, and is especially contemptuous of the followers of Aquinas.

[5] Probably the *Iudicium D. Martini Lutheri de Erasmo Roterodamo*; Epp 1341A n315, 1342 n160

outcome itself will show that nothing is further from my mind. Had I been willing to take a stand against the gospel, mountains of gold would have been my reward.[6] My refusal to do so has cost me all kinds of trouble and anxiety. Luther's friends on many occasions give too little thought to what needs to be done. Consequently they take no advice. I would gladly write to Luther himself, if the effort were not vain and likely at the same time to hurt myself and cause me more trouble. All I can do is to pray to Christ that he may deign to turn our rash and foolish actions to His praise. I would gladly also come and see you, were it not such a long way; for my poor health[7] permits me hardly any travel at all.

I beg you to commend me warmly to our gracious lord the most illustrious elector of Saxony, with whom I feel very great and sincere sympathy. And so farewell.

From Basel, eve of St Gregory 1523
Erasmus

1349 / To Gianfrancesco Torresani Basel, 18 March 1523

Gianfrancesco Torresani of Asola (c 1481–1546) was the eldest son of Andrea Torresani (Ep 212:6 note), father-in-law and business partner of the famous Venetian printer Aldo Manuzio (Ep 207). After the death of Aldo in 1515, Francesco helped his father run the Aldine press, writing many of the prefaces to the books published.

Torresani's 'quarrelsome' letter and Erasmus' reply to it (lines 1–2) have been lost. But this second reply shows that Torresani's complaint had to do with the enlarged edition of the *Adagia* (ie, the *Proverbia* of line 10), the first edition of which had been published by the Aldine firm in 1508 while Erasmus was in Venice. Froben had reprinted it without authorization in 1513 (Ep 283:182–3), but since then there had been several Froben editions amplified and edited by Erasmus: 1515, 1517/18, October 1520 and, the latest, January 1523; see Ep 1341A n135. Without Erasmus' knowledge (line 16), the Torresani had reprinted the Froben edition of 1517/18 in September 1520, only to find it superseded by the Froben edition of October. Now they may have heard of the new edition just published. The essence of their complaint appears to have been that, as the publishers of the original edition, they were entitled to the chance at a subsequent edition that would not immediately be superseded by the product of a rival press. Since this was, broadly speaking, Erasmus' own

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[6] See Epp 1213:42–5, 1269:9–11, 1270, 1324, 1338, 1341A:1362–70. Cf also Ep 1352:131–2 and n20.

[7] See Ep 1267 n5.

view of the matter (cf Ep 732:21 note), his reply was to offer Torresani the chance to pirate the new edition with additions and revisions supplied by himself. However, no such edition appeared from the Aldine firm.

The text is from Vatican MS Reg Lat 2023 f 160, first published by P. de Nolhac, *Erasme en Italie* 2nd ed (Paris 1898).

Greeting, my dear Francesco. You have had by now, I expect, the letter in which I reply to that rather quarrelsome one from you. I have certainly not forgotten our original relationship, and if I wanted to forget it the stone in my kidneys would not let me, which I first contracted when I was with you;[1] and when it attacks me again, as it does from time to time, it reminds me of Venice. I have no agreement with Froben or with any other printer, so far am I from conspiring to injure you. And I admit that, when I left you,[2] your father told me, if I had anything, to send it to him; but his expression, when he said it, made me think it was a sardonic smile.[3]

Froben this past year[4] has printed my *Proverbia*, once again enlarged. I have put my last touches to it, for I think I have already put enough effort into that book, and I have made many additions from good authors. If yours are sold out, I will send you a copy completed and revised, to which I will give no one access in preference to you, provided you have in mind to print within a year. If what you printed has not gone very well, you cannot blame me, for I had no idea that you had done it. On this point therefore let me know as soon as you can what your plans are. In publishing the Bible[5] you admit yourself that you set up from uncorrected copy. I too have found many mistakes, particularly in Proverbs, Ecclesiasticus, and books like them. Your father will therefore do the right thing if he gives us the same work again from copy that is more correct. If he were to print Chrysostom's works in Greek, especially the things that have not been translated, they should be highly saleable; or if there were anything of Origen's in Greek.[6] The world has a passion for religious books, and there is no risk of any competition with a big book.

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1349

[1] Cf *Adagia* II i 1 where, in a passage inserted in February 1526, Erasmus states that his first attack of the stone occurred when he was working on the *Adagia* at Venice; LB II 405C.

[2] In December 1508; Ep 212

[3] *Adagia* III V 1

[4] Since the preface in Froben's name bears the date 1 January 1523, most of the printing had doubtless been done in 1522.

[5] See Ep 770 introduction.

[6] Nothing came of either of these suggestions.

The young man who brings this is keen to learn your profession.[7] Please look into the question whether he can be any use to you, for he begged me to recommend him to you with this in mind. Best wishes to you and all yours, and pray give them my cordial greetings.

Basel, 18 March 1523
Your sincere friend Erasmus
To the learned Master Francesco Asola. In Venice

1350 / From Herman Lethmaet Mechelen, 18 March [1523]

This is Lethmaet's response to Ep 1345. The manuscript of the letter (=Ep 14 in Enthoven) is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.96).

Greeting. All really good scholars without exception, dear Erasmus, are passionately eager to see your Augustine,[1] and urge you with one voice not to keep them waiting too long. Baechem[2] has openly listed me too among Luther's supporters in a large convivial gathering of theologians, and has easily brought several members of the same college[3] to share his opinion. May I ask you another thing? Will you lay down for me the code at court regarding presents and gifts, when to accept or refuse? When you commend me to the pope, please do it in rather particular terms. He gave me in September a prebend in St Mary's, Utrecht, and also excused me the commission that would have come to him in accordance with the bulls. If I am not mistaken, among all the men on whom he has conferred benefices I stand first – and all this, as they call it, 'of his own mere motion.' Where this may lead, I do not know. My uncle,[4] relying on an old friendship that began when they were at the university, had written him a letter recommending me, and that was how this good fortune first started.

My most reverend lord and master is always boasting of your having

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[7] Probably Johannes Hovius (documented 1518–27), who had been in Erasmus' service since 1518, primarily, it seems, as a copyist. This appears to be the point (cf Ep 867:189n) at which Hovius left Erasmus' employ to seek his fortune in Italy.

1350

[1] See Ep 1309 introduction.

[2] Ep 1254 n6

[3] The faculty of theology at Louvain

[4] Unidentified

dedicated Hilary[5] to him. A brother of his has arrived here lately from Burgundy, who is among your warmest admirers. He is of a most generous disposition, so that I have no doubt, if you paid him as great a compliment as you have in this book to the archbishop of Palermo, you would find, and find really and truly, that I am not romancing when I praise his liberality. My master is of a different disposition. The brother's name, if you wish to know, is Ferry de Carondelet.[6] He is the principal archdeacon of the cathedral of Besançon, the city which is two days' journey away from Basel. He also has countless other benefices, rich ones too, besides many annuities and an abbey. Their father was chancellor. Five brothers[7] are still living, all very rich and influential.

Please see to it, dearest Erasmus, that in future you do not torment me with so many months' waiting for a letter from you as you have lately.[8] Meanwhile our anti-Erasmians dream what they wish were true, and even have the face to spread dreams of this kind among ordinary people as if they were real. May their dreams always be false, and may you ever live safe, vigorous, and happy!

Mechelen, 18 March

A most devoted recipient of your kindness, Herman Lethmaet of Gouda

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[5] Ep 1334

[6] Ferry (c 1473–1528), fifth son of the Jean de Carondelet (d 1501) who had been chancellor of Burgundy under Maximilian I, studied law. By 1508 he sat in the Grand Council of Mechelen and enjoyed the confidence of the regent Margaret of Austria. In 1509 Erasmus met him at Rome (Allen Ep 1359:11–13), where in 1510 Ferry became legal agent for the Hapsburg and Burgundian lands at the papal court. Meanwhile, though never a priest, he became canon and archdeacon of the Besançon chapter (1504) and commendatory abbot of Montbenoît (1511). In 1520 he finally settled down in Burgundy to devote himself to the welfare of both chapter and abbey. In response to Lethmaet's suggestion that Ferry might be gained as a patron, Erasmus sent him a copy of the edition of Hilary (Ep 1334) that had been dedicated to his brother Jean (Allen Ep 1359:14–15). In 1524 Erasmus visited Ferry at Besançon (Ep 1610); in 1526 he sought biblical manuscripts from him (Ep 1749); and just before his death dedicated to him an edition of Faustus of Riez (Ep 2002).

[7] The eldest brother, Claude (1467–1518), head of the Council of Regency when Charles went to Spain in 1517, was now dead. Besides Jean (Ep 1276) and Ferry, three brothers were still living: Guillaume (d 1526), Charles (d 1529), and Philippe (d 1547).

[8] Over three months between Epp 1320 and 1345. Erasmus answered this letter more promptly (Ep 1359, dated 17 April).

1351 / From Pieter Wichmans Mechelen, 22 March 1522/3

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 13) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It is Wichmans' response to a letter that is no longer extant. Also lost are the letters (line 27) that caused Erasmus to doubt the loyalty of an old friend and host (Ep 1231). There is no other trace of this painful incident in the correspondence.

Greeting. I never would have feared that Fortune (though I have often felt her power) could ever be so cruel as to inflict on me the stigma with which you seem to brand me in your letter, a thing you would certainly never have done had you preserved any memory of the sort of man I am. For if you had, it would be clear that I am far too much moved by the solid devotion which knows no disloyalty to be unfaithful and false and commit some offence against the very spirit of friendship. What, pray, could I, a mere country worm who counts for less than nothing, achieve, however deeply offended, against an Atlas like yourself? Was it for me to criticize the work in which, so as to leave no opening for any hostile critic, you express so briefly and clearly what you think of Sancho Caranzanga?[1] Yet as your views become known to the world, the pope exalts them to the skies in an official letter,[2] resting upon your shoulders what remains of the church, whose tarnished reputation is now deplored. And in any case no other view of you can be taken by human judgment; for you and sound learning are synonymous. I have therefore no fancy to explode such a notorious and shameless lie at greater length.

You wanted me to know this so that (as you put it) 'evil men would have no handle to take hold of.' To return the compliment, I should like you to know that in the case of Schrijver[3] and his colleague,[4] who are now in detention among the hooded brethren,[5] I have resisted the promptings of charity a hundred times, hard though the struggle was, and have not even gone near the place, much less visited the prisoners, though I was invited time and again by the friars to do so and prodded by a certain alderman[6] to

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1351

[1] Ie, Carranza (Ep 1277 n8)

[2] Ep 1324

[3] Cornelis Schrijver (Ep 1299 n24)

[4] Nicolaas van Broeckhoven (Ep 1299 n23)

[5] Allen suggests, without citing his source, that the reference may be to the Franciscans of Brussels, who had been given charge of Jacob Proost (Ep 1254 n4), arrested at the same time.

[6] Otto Clemen *Johann Pupper von Goch* (Leipzig 1896) 274–5, suggests that this was probably the 'consul Urselius' who helped Schrijver get permission to return to Antwerp after his release from custody.

help free the aforementioned colleague: I wanted to act honourably and deny anyone that 'handle to take hold of.'

But it is your friends, you say, who pass on this information in their letters. I freely admit, though you have deserved the gratitude of all men past and present and future by the wonderful things you write, I know only a few all the same who in this stormy time (I pass judgment on no man) mention your name in public without reserve. Sucket[7] is one, and Adriaan Wiele[8] the secretary, and (with his usual modesty) Maarten Davidts.[9] To these I would add myself as a third or fourth, had not your 'friends' expelled me from their number. Pieter Gillis[10] I have spoken to once, about your books;[11] Goclenius[12] three times, hoping for news of you; Dorp,[13] at the time of Jan Sucket's death;[14] that doctor who married poor Jan Sucket's daughter,[15] who whenever he sees me starts a conversation about your health; Herman,[16] a member of the household of my most generous lord the archbishop of Palermo[17] – there is no one else with whom I have exchanged a word, unless it be master Frans van der Hulst.[18] But, for pity's sake, it was none of these, unless I am quite wrong, who wrote to you about me like this.

I keep my temper; but I have one thing more to say. Either strike me out of the list of your friends or act as a man of your distinction ought to act and give me some indication of who these 'friends' are, that I may show them, whoever they are, to be either no friends, or liars. Whatever you do, I shall not change, not because you deal out life and death with your pen as you

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[7] Antoon I Sucket (Ep 1331 n11)

[8] Adriaan Wiele of Brussels (d post 1530), about whom little is known. In 1507 he was 'supervisor and tutor' to the future Charles V and his sisters. By 1523 he was secretary to Charles V in the Council of Brabant, in which capacity he attended the Diet of Augsburg in 1530 (Ep 2408).

[9] Ep 1254

[10] Ep 184

[11] The books which Erasmus had left at the College of the Lily in the care of Jan de Neve; cf Ep 1355:20–1.

[12] Ep 1257

[13] Ep 1266 n2

[14] Jan (I) Sucket (d 1522), brother of Antoon (n7 above), member of the Grand Council of Mechelen. Jan was clearly an old acquaintance of Erasmus, who addressed a letter to him in 1525 (Ep 1556), evidently forgetting that Wichmans had informed him of Jan's death two years earlier.

[15] Jan's daughter Maria (d 1551) was married to Jan Vrancx (Van der Voirst), physician to Margaret of Austria. He is probably the physician referred to in Ep 1355:12.

[16] Lethmaet (Ep 1320)

[17] Jean de Carondelet (Ep 1276)

[18] Ep 1345 n8

think fit (be Erasmus by all means, as you have been or will be), but simply because of that deep devotion which I feel for you and which I shall continue to show with all affection and respect. Farewell.

Mechelen, this 22 March 1522 French style

Your most devoted Pieter Wichmans, priest, your host in the country, who having done nothing to deserve this stigma[19] is paying a penalty he has not earned

I am delighted to hear of the pope's diploma.[20] Yet, if you were to number me among your friends, I should advise you to enjoy its external leaves and fruits to your heart's content, but without driving your teeth too hard into the kernel.[21]

To the monarch of the world of letters, Master Erasmus of Rotterdam

1352 / To Adrian VI [Basel, 22 March 1523]

This letter is what remains of the plan for dealing with the Lutheran trouble that Erasmus submitted to Pope Adrian. For Erasmus' offer to draft the plan and the pope's eager acceptance, see Epp 1329:13–16, and 1338:24–32. Despite the promise made in Allen Ep 1358:3 to publish 'shortly' a 'brief exhortation' to Christian concord, the letter was not published until 1529 in the *Opus epistolarum*. Moreover, the text breaks off abruptly soon after the beginning (line 168) of the section containing Erasmus' concrete proposals. The abridgment may have been intentional, reflecting a prudent decision not to publish a deliberately confidential communication (lines 26–7) in which Erasmus had expressed himself 'outspokenly,' even 'rashly' (Allen Ep 1358:42). Adrian never replied, which caused Erasmus to fear that the plan had given offence (Allen Epp 1384:25–6, 1496:55–8).

The date is assigned on the basis of Ep 1353:268.

TO ADRIAN VI FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Most holy Father, the bearer[1] of this seemed to me more or less reliable, but he presented himself unexpectedly after dinner, with the intention of setting out at first light next day. I nearly decided therefore that it was wiser not to write at all to so great a prince on such a difficult subject than to write

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[19] See line 2.

[20] Ep 1324

[21] Cf Horace *Satires* 2.1.77–8.

1352

[1] An unnamed canon of St Donatian's in Bruges; Allen Ep 1358:40–2

on the spur of the moment. None the less, since in both your official letters[2] – and both have arrived safely – your Holiness urges me so strongly, and appeals to me almost as a matter of obedience, to contribute to the best of my ability any proposals I may have for bringing these disturbances to a peaceful end, I bow before your authority and at the same time put my trust in that mildness of yours which is so appropriate to your pontifical office, and write even at short notice, in hopes of writing more fully when I have more leisure and a more reliable bearer for my letter.

It would have been both safer and more convenient to treat of these things face to face; such was definitely my intention, and your generous invitation could not be more friendly. But I am forced to obey the edicts of a most cruel tyrant. And who may that be? you will say. One far more cruel than any Mezentius or Phalaris;[3] and its name is the stone.[4] In your city, it is true, the plague has subsided and so has the winter; but it is a long journey, even supposing it were safe, over the snow-covered Alps, by way of those stove-heated rooms the very smell of which makes me feel faint,[5] as well as dirty and uncomfortable inns, and acid wines of which the taste puts me in instant peril.[6] If my health would support it, it would be safer to travel through France; but this will come about in God's good time. Meanwhile I call the Lord Jesus to witness to my conviction that whatever I write will be written sincerely and in singleness of heart. No mortal man shall read this letter except us two. If you approve it, it is at your service; if you disapprove of any of it, suppose it was never written.

How I wish that I could command the resources which you attribute to me to bring this discord to an end! I would not hesitate to heal the evils of the time by the sacrifice of my own life. In the first place, many men write better than I do, nor can this business be settled by pen and ink. My learning is well below average, and such as I have is drawn from ancient authors and more suitable to the pulpit than the battlefield. And then what weight can be attached to a mere individual like myself? Will the authority of Erasmus have any effect on people who give no weight to the authority of so many universities, so many princes, and the supreme pontiff himself? My popularity, if I had any, has either cooled off so far that it scarcely exists, or has quite evaporated, or even has turned into hatred. Time was when hundreds of letters described me as greatest of the great, prince of the world of literature, bright star of Germany, luminary of learning, champion of humane studies, bulwark of a more genuine theology.[7] Now I am never mentioned, or am painted in far different colours.

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[2] Epp 1324 and 1338

[3] See Ep 1342 n8.

[4] See Ep 1267 n5.

[5] Ep 1258 n18

[6] Cf Ep 1316 n7.

I care nothing for these empty labels, which only laid a burden on me. But oh, the slanders which many madmen now pour on my defenceless head, the bitter pamphlets in which they attack me, the menaces with which they terrify me! For there was no lack of people who threatened to destroy me if I took any steps at all. But others complain loudly all the time that I have an understanding with Luther's party, and they complain that I never attack him in print; yet Luther's most violent supporters are saying indignantly that I attack Luther too often, and more bitterly than they think right. Luther makes just these protests in his letters to his friends.[8] Germany covers a wide area and is well supplied with able men; yet it is not only Germany that is in the grip of this movement. I would hardly dare to set down in how many regions and to what a depth the minds of ordinary people have been penetrated by support of Luther and hatred of the papacy. Indeed one would hardly credit the obstinacy of their minds; they themselves call it principle. And a good part of those who love the humanities are no strangers to this party.

It is with much grief and reluctance that I report this, most holy Father, and I wish it were not true. I had a most delightful relationship with all these scholars; in this possession alone I counted myself fortunate. I would have preferred death, almost, to the breaking of so many ties and drawing down the hatred of the world, I could almost say, on my own head. And yet I thought it better to do this than to seem a party man, nor do I yet regret the spirit in which I acted. I will not here recount what a tragic catastrophe, incurable perhaps, I could have started, had I let myself be exploited by some people's passions.[9] I would rather forego the gratitude I deserve for that than blurt out a secret. Nor do I look for gratitude if I refrained from doing wrong, however much the other side may call it true religion. If I had used ill health and old age as an excuse merely for taking no part in this business, I suppose I deserved some gratitude. But as it is, I have written so many letters[10] and published so many books that put on record how far I am from any understanding with Luther. I have deprived them all of any hope of my collaborating, and have not let them even use my name in public to

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[7] Allen's notes to lines 35–7 provide references to letters in which these flattering titles are used.

[8] See Ep 1348 n5.

[9] Perhaps, as Allen suggests, those who wished him to assume a leading role in the defence of Reuchlin; see Ep 1041.

[10] See Ep 1275 n9. The most recent such letter was Ep 1342.

shelter under. I have urged them publicly[11] to give up their subversive policy, and in private[12] I have restrained or recalled anyone I could reach, or at least have made them less extreme. And I have had some effect; there are men who are grateful to me for my honest advice. Over and over again I have publicly expressed my dislike of Luther's intemperate language, nor has anyone been more indignant than myself at the irreverence with which they have treated the name of the king of England.[13]

And all the time, while I am thus engaged in Germany, I am libelled in Rome[14] in crazy and worse than defamatory pamphlets. In Brabant it is no longer among sots and carters, it is in public sermons and in solemn lectures that I am pronounced a heretic, a heresiarch, a schismatic, and a forger; this happens by no means rarely, and not with so little publicity that it can be ignored. If your Holiness could enquire of the common people, the first comer will giver you their names.[15] Luther's party has certain supporters who advance his cause under colour of having consigned themselves to perdition unless they can overturn it by any means in their power. And these men[16] fancy that they carry the pope's cause on their shoulders. They put it about that there is nothing pestilential in Luther's books that is not also to be found in mine; nor have they yet been able to produce a single point in which I agree with Luther. But they put an interpretation on some things, it is true, and in a most distorting way; they have their suspicions, and in a most hostile spirit. In the same way I could collect a hundred passages in the Pauline Epistles which agree with things that have been condemned in Luther's books. A sinister precedent for those who insist that we shall believe what they say in matters that concern the faith! For what result do they achieve except that, while they are openly the slaves of their own private appetites, they undermine the cause of the faith, deprive themselves of all authority, and embitter the feelings of ordinary people towards the papacy.

I wrote a good deal before suspecting that Luther had come into existence or before anyone dreamed of the rise of this generation. Almost all of it, I confess, has been done in a hurry, for this is a congenital fault of mine; but I have always submitted myself to the judgment of the learned, and

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[11] In the *Consilium* of 1520; Ep 1267 n6

[12] See Ep 1275 n8.

[13] Ep 1308 n3

[14] By Zúñiga (Ep 1260 nn36, 45) and Carranza (Ep 1277 n8)

[15] Baechem, Theoderici, Hoogstraten, and (possibly) Jacobus Latomus; see Ep 1330:53–8, and Epp 1299–1302.

[16] Ie, the Louvain theologians; see the preceding note.

especially of the church. I have asked many people to point out to me if there was anything in my work that needed alteration; and those who at that time either said nothing or expressed their approval condemn what they approved before now that Luther has appeared. They invent some reason to complain of everything. There is a scorpion, as the saying goes, hidden under every stone:[17] something dubious here, something scandalous there, something irreverent somewhere else. And though no university and no bishop has yet passed judgment on me, there are people who protest that I am a heretic, a heresiarch, on their own private responsibility. Is there any spirit so inflexibly loyal that these outrages would not drive it into rebellion? But no force has yet been able to divert me from the true path. And yet this is how Arius and Tertullian were first set in motion.[18]

Your Holiness must therefore discern whether you think this spirit deserves to be abandoned to the unbridled enmity of certain persons, and also whether that will be conducive to the business which you have in hand. Those who wish well to the papal cause do their best to turn heretic into orthodox, to recall those who have been estranged, and to strengthen the waverers; and this is what your Holiness also urges with no less prudence than true Christian spirit. But these Atlas-figures, who bear up the shaky pillars of religion and the church, push the waverers off their balance, estrange their friends, turn orthodox into heretic, and distort what has been well and truly said. Am I not right to regret my old age, which has fallen in this generation like the mouse in the proverb that fell into the pitch?[19] Many owe promotion and wealth to Luther,[20] some have found it profitable to be of his party. Could any position be more unhappy than my own? – I toil day and night for the good of all men at my own costs and charges, and receive no recompense except to be torn in pieces by both sides.

But your Holiness suggests a remedy for these misfortunes. 'Come to Rome,' you say, 'or write some really savage attack on Luther. Declare war on the whole of Luther's party.' In the first place, when I hear the words 'Come to Rome,' the effect is just like telling a crab to fly. The crab answered 'Give me wings,' and I shall reply 'Give me back my youth, give me back good health.' How I wish my excuse on this point were not so unanswerable! It would take too long to set down all the reasons which have persuaded me to remain all this time in Basel. On one point I would dare to take my oath: if I had seen any course more likely to be of service to

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[17] *Adagia* I iv 34

[18] Cf Ep 1288:32–6.

[19] *Adagia* II iii 68

[20] Ie, his enemies; see Allen Epp 1397:27–9, 1408:25, 1417:13–15.

Christendom, I would have taken it even at the risk of my life. I never lacked the will to achieve something, only the hope of making any progress. What could be more foolish than to stir up trouble which is happily at peace, if you have no hope but to make things much worse?

Let me beg you with all the force at my command: allow your humble sheep for a few moments to speak freely to his shepherd. Supposing my health permitted, what good should I do in Rome? Shall I be free from any contact with Luther's party? I have no contact with them now, for there is no communication between us. So that I for my part run no risk from them, as far as my own attitude is concerned. As for correcting their errors, I shall sooner do some good as their neighbour than if I am far away. What can a physician do for his patients if he takes himself off a long way away? When a rumour had got about here that I had been summoned to Rome, what a hubbub instantly arose, with everyone saying that I was skipping off to your part of the world for my share of the spoils![21] What weight then will anything carry that I write when I am with you, and corrupted by rewards, as they are quite convinced? If I join you, I shall perhaps live or write in greater safety; but that is to think of myself and not of what is at stake. If I write against Luther with some moderation and courtesy, it will look as though I am trifling with him; and if I imitate his own style and challenge Luther's party to a pitched battle, will this do anything but stir up a hornets' nest? Up to now, I confess, I have kept alive my friendships with scholars by such means as I could; for in this way I think I do more good.

Thus far, you will say, I hear nothing but complaints; what I am waiting for is a plan. Yet even what I have said hitherto is part of a plan. In any case, for a start, I perceive that many think this trouble should be healed by severity; but I fear the outcome shows that this plan has long been a mistake. For I see more danger than I could wish that this business will end in appalling bloodshed. I am not discussing now what they deserve, but what is best for the public peace. This cancer has gone too far to be curable by the knife or cautery. In former times, I agree, that is how the Wycliffite party was suppressed in England by the royal power; but it was suppressed rather than extinguished.[22] And yet what could be done at that period in a kingdom

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[21] See Ep 1342 n136.

[22] In 1401 Parliament inaugurated the suppression of the Lollards, as Wycliffe's followers were known, with the act *De haeretico comburendo*. Persons convicted of heretical views by diocesan courts were to be turned over to the secular courts to be burned. Despite active persecution (cf Allen Ep 1367:76–9), Lollardy persisted throughout the fifteenth century and into the sixteenth as an underground, largely proletarian, anti-clerical movement calling for a scriptural, non-sacramental, non-hierarchical, lay-dominated religion. In the 1530s the

which was subject entirely to the will of one individual is not practical here, I suspect, over such a vast area and cut up among so many princes. At any rate, if it has been decided to overwhelm this evil by imprisonment and scourging, by confiscation, exile, excommunication, and death, there will be no need of any plan from me. Not but what I see that a most humane nature like your own prefers a very different sort of plan, designed to heal the evils rather than to punish them. This will not be found abnormally difficult – if only all men were of the same nature as you, so that laying their private feelings on one side, to use your own words, they would wholeheartedly desire to promote Christ's glory and the salvation of Christian people. But if every man concentrates privately on his own advantage, if theologians insist that their own authority must be watertight at every point, if monks allow no reduction in their own privileges, if princes cling to all their own powers tooth and nail, it will be found very difficult to make any plan for the common good.

The first thing will be to investigate the sources from which this evil so often springs up afresh; for they must be set right before all else. And then it will not be found ineffective if once again a pardon is offered to those who have gone astray through the persuasion or influence of others; better still, an amnesty for all wrongs previously committed, which seem to have come about by some sort of destiny. If God deals with us on that principle every day, forgiving all our offences as often as the sinner shows himself penitent, is there any reason why God's vicegerent should not do the same? And yet for the present let the civil power and the princes restrain innovations which contribute very little to religion, and to subversion a great deal. I should also wish, if it could be arranged, for some limit on the liberty of printing pamphlets. Besides these measures, the world should be given some hope of changes in certain points where complaints of oppression are not unjustified. At the sweet name of liberty all men will breathe afresh. Every method should be used to promote this, so far as it can be done without imperilling religion; steps should be taken to relieve men's consciences of their burdens, but no less at the same time to safeguard the dignity of princes and of bishops. But this dignity should be measured by those things in which their true dignity really consists; and just the same is true of popular liberty.

Your Holiness will ask, 'What are these sources, or what are the points

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old Lollard heresy gradually merged with the new Protestant heresy, so many of whose doctrines it had anticipated. See A.G. Dickens *The English Reformation* (London 1964) 22–37.

that need reform, of which you speak?' To evaluate these things my opinion is that, region by region, men should be called together who are incorruptible, influential, humane, widely respected, and emotionally well-balanced, whose opinion ...

1353 / To Udalricus Zasius Basel, [23 March] 1523

This letter was first published in 1574 under the title *D. Erasmi Roterodami ad Vdalricum Zasium epistola de delectu ciborum in ieiuniis ab ecclesia catholica excusa,* edited by one Hilarius Pyrckmaier of Landshut. The volume is very rare: Allen found only one copy, in the university library at Freiburg. No printer's name is given. In his preface, Pyrckmaier states that the original, perhaps the letter actually received by Zasius, had been supplied by Johann Hartung (1504–79), professor of Greek at Freiburg. Allen's text includes some corrections and insertions taken from a seventeenth-century manuscript (in the Stadtbibliothek Bern) which may also have been based on the original letter.

The month-date is assigned on the basis of the clear reference to the day after Passion Sunday in line 179 (but see n12).

The letter was written shortly after Erasmus' return from a visit to Freiburg in response to pressing invitations (Epp 1252:6–7, 1316:40). In the colloquy *'Ιχθυοφαγία,* 'A Fish Diet,' first published in February 1526, he states that the visit lasted only a few days and gives a light-hearted description, parallelling the one here, of the excitement aroused when Zasius gave him chicken to eat even though it was Lent: ASD I-3 529–30, Thompson 349–50. Erasmus was back in Basel by 11 March (Ep 1348).

The freedom with which Erasmus expressed himself on highly controversial subjects and his outspoken comments on the emperor (lines 117–24) doubtless explain why Erasmus did not publish the letter himself.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND ZASIUS

A light-winged breath of rumour (false, as I suppose) has reached us here to the effect that you have been taken to court and obliged to defend yourself on the charge that you had procured a roast chicken for my humble self and that, although a lawyer of such eminence that you can act as counsel for the defence in the most difficult cases, on this occasion you owed your acquittal solely to the plea that this was authorized by a licence from the pope.[1] Of course I want to know whether there is any truth in the story we heard, since

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1353

[1] Ie, the one granted to Erasmus; see line 65.

for my part I find it improbable. To begin with, I wonder what spy, what common informer could have reported the delicious odour of that chicken to the town council. Second, I do not believe any member of the council to be so uncivilized as to wish, after my making the journey to your city in order to show my respect for you, and my receiving more than one invitation in the name of the magistrates, to cast such aspersions on me and send me away with a black mark like this for my parting present. It was, I suppose, because you saw that I was in peril from the stone and therefore in a hurry to depart that secretly and without my knowledge you had provided a chicken for me in your house. This was a consummate example of your kindness, my dear Zasius, for which you are no less remarkable than for the learning which earns you a respect that few men share. I myself however, as you know, did not partake, and rebuked you for taking your kindness too far, and doing something for my benefit which might cause trouble. I felt that I was about to give birth to a stone,[2] and was absolutely determined to leave; and consequently, for fear that with the gathering of another large company I might be obliged to remain longer at table and shortly afterwards to ride my horse with a full stomach, I wanted to take an egg and a glass of wine in your house and get into the saddle immediately, that the birth-pangs might not come upon me while I was still with you. For we sufferers feel our travail in advance, just as much as women do in pregnancy.

Nor did my forebodings deceive. On the fourth day after my return I produced with acute pain an incredible quantity of stones and gravel and one stone of enormous size. Already when I went to stay with you I was still weak from a previous birth, and my only purpose in doing so was to see if the bodily motion would either kill or toughen me. As far as physical strength went, the motion did me good; but those longish walks before dinner and the protracted dinner and the change of wine brought back my trouble with the stone, and anyone who knows how close it is to death and what an agony it is would be a monster of cruelty if, for the sake of some superstition about diet, he expected anyone to plunge himself into such dreadful pain and put his life in obvious danger. For, to speak the truth, of all the practices that have wormed their way into the Christian life nothing contributes less to true personal religion, and nothing is so close to Judaism,[3] as this discrimination in what we eat. If it has the approval of certain bishops, its purpose is not to torture us with sickness and pain, but to moderate the heat of the body. It follows that the man who under pressure from some such great necessity eats food appropriate to his bodily condition

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[2] Ep 1267 n5

[3] See Ep 1333 n14.

in moderation and with a thankful heart commits no sin by transgressing a decree of the bishops even if he has no licence; while he would sin against the divine law if through superstitious abstinence from food he were knowingly and deliberately to encompass his own death, no less than if on a fast day he were to starve himself to death for fear of transgressing a decree from the pope.

Would that person be thought to have the heart of a Christian who, though it was certain that someone, if he were to eat fish, would thereby run the risk of epilepsy or paralysis or apoplexy or the stone (which is more cruel than them all), yet forced the wretched man to eat fish? This is cruelty, not piety; its end is not Christian discipline but manslaughter; nor is this so much obedience to decrees made by bishops as to go against the intention of the bishops and be a slave to one's own superstition or other people's. The last thing the Roman pontiff wants is to see a man die for the sake of his decrees or be put in evident peril of his life; and even if he wanted such a thing, he has no legal power to make a decree which brings a man destruction and not well-being. In my case, the weakness of my wretched body has always made it dangerous to eat fish, and that is why I long ago secured a licence.[4] On top of that has come old age, which always takes something from one's bodily strength, and on top of that periodical attacks of the stone, a complaint more frightening than death itself. Add now my burden of work, even were it nothing but to answer all the letters that come pouring in from all parts of the world. And yet for the sake of weaker brethren I often put myself in danger, for fear that someone, using my example as an excuse, may do in self-indulgence what I am forced sometimes to concede to necessity. This indeed is carrying Christian charity to excessive and unnecessary lengths, to suffer yourself in order to avoid risk to a weaker neighbour. But what kind of charity is it to insist that for the sake of the weakness of two or three people their neighbour should be put in peril of his life? For my part, what I did not dare do in your house, my dear Zasius, I should have done without hesitation under the roof of the present pope, though he is not entirely exempt from superstition of the kind, but not to the extent of requiring abstinence from meat from Erasmus and others like him.

How much better they manage in Rome, and indeed in the whole of Italy![5] – and now in Basel too they are selling meat openly in the markets that those who need it may not go without. 'But,' you'll say, 'it is sometimes eaten by those who don't need it.' It is more tolerable for hundreds of people to eat meat who do not need it than for one man who deserves to live to die because there are rules about food. It is surprising how we choose this department by which to measure Christianity. If trouble is in store for those who do not abstain from meat, it is much fairer to punish those who do not abstain from supper.[6] But scandal they say, must be avoided. And a cruel scandal it is, if for the unjust superstition of a handful of men their neighbour must be forced to die. No, the public must continually be made to learn what the Apostle teaches,[7] that a man should not pass judgment on his brother in respect of food or drink, but put the best interpretation he can on anything that it is not wrong to do. 'But it is illegal without a licence.' No, an immediate emergency cannot wait for the protection of a licence. You are in the grip of a sickness that may kill you: are you to send to Rome for a licence that may protect you when you're dead? Though I do not approve of those who in a rash and subversive spirit condemn a public practice, whatever it may be.

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[4] See Ep 1079 n1.

[5] In the *Epistola de esu carnium* (LB IX 1206F) Erasmus notes with approval that in Italy meat is freely available, even in Lent, to those whose health would suffer without it. The same point is made in the colloquy Ἰχθυοφαγία, 'A Fish Diet' (ASD I-3 528 / Thompson 349).

I hear that your town council is over-superstitious in this regard. If this is true, I do not blame them so much as certain Pharisees who, having no true religion themselves, defend the semblance of religion with titles and colours and the shapes of vestments. In other ways you would find them entirely worldly. They love their comforts, nurse their resentment and satisfy it, are proud, brutal, self-satisfied, envious, greedy, devoid of any feeling of true charity, and the slaves of ambition and their bellies. What would these men have left in the way of piety if you removed their vestments and their discrimination between different foods? And of course this Pharisaical type insinuates this sort of superstition into the minds of princes, who are ignorant of the things of the spirit and take for holiness what they are taught by those who have the trappings of religion to recommend them. So the more inexperienced and ingenuous the prince, the less he knows how to suspect other people's deceptions, and so he is the more easily imposed on. Zeal is praiseworthy, even when not according to wisdom; but zeal without judgment must be corrected by the standards of true piety.

I cannot fail to approve the religious spirit of the emperor who, under the influence of Dominicasters[8] and Franciscans, believes that these things play an important part in the Christian religion. But he will think differently when years and experience have given him more judgment. And how I wish that those who were able to implant this spark of religious feeling in his mind had given him other knowledge and other convictions conducive to the public good! He is a young man with plenty of brains and no doubt would have proved an apt pupil there too. Look at the universal corruption of magistrates, the uncontrolled brigandage, the disasters that befall harmless country people, the cruel fleecing of the public, the impious upheavals of war, and the carnage! How can these be avoided? That is what they ought to have been taught by these men who mix earth and sky[9] over the eating of meat and make a grand tragic scene out of nothing at all. And so I cannot be induced to believe that men of any judgment with some wisdom and knowledge of the world would cause trouble for anyone if on account of some unquestionable requirement of his body he were to eat in the privacy of his own house, no matter what the day, whatever should be demanded by his state of health. If, however, they have acquired something in the way of superstition from their pharisaical teachers, their intentions are to be commended; but their judgment needs to be corrected by learned and honest men like yourself.

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[6] Erasmus thought that abstinence from food, ie, going without supper, had apostolic sanction, but that forbidding certain foods was an absurd human invention: see *'Ιχθυοφαγία*, 'A Fish Diet' ASD I-3 526 / Thompson 346 and *De esu carnium* LB IX 1202A–1203F. Cf Ep 916:164–9, 279–84.

[7] Rom 14

But if things have come to such a pass that we must be compelled by the civil magistrates to be religious, I wish people could be forcibly protected more than anything else from things which are a real menace to true religion. Think of the evils of which drunkenness is mistress! But actually on Good Friday one is permitted to get so drunk that one vomits or has a fit, while for a sick man in peril of his life to eat chicken is a capital offence. In the old days, if the magistrates ever demeaned themselves to such humble cares, they made it their business to ensure that weights were not reduced from their proper size to defraud the customer, that the vendor did not put up the price of things above a reasonable figure, that no monopoly was arranged between the sellers of anything, that wine was not adulterated, that no tainted or rotten meat or fish was sold, that dinners were not more expensive than was expedient, that nobody should spend more on building a house or buying clothes than his means permitted. These are small things, but they contribute to the welfare of the citizens. And in any case, what a man should eat or drink in his own house to suit his bodily necessities is usually laid down by physicians rather than magistrates.

If, however, it is religious for the civil magistrates to take measures to compel the public to observe the decrees laid down by men, much more was it right for this to be done in fields where God has laid down the rules. We commit fornication with impunity while we are in good health, and when we are sick we may not eat with impunity what may make us well. If a lay magistrate takes no notice of divine ordinances except when he so chooses, why do they not maintain fair play in the ordinances of men? Or rather, why do they like things upside-down? One can sup as one likes with impunity, and one cannot eat an egg with impunity; and yet both are equally forbidden by the authority of the bishops. Wagoners and sailors openly carry things in and out on Sundays, and a cobbler is not allowed to sew a pair of shoes. Horsemen go out riding on feast-days sometimes to hunt,[10] and we make a grand tragic scene if someone merely eats meat. No one gets into trouble because on a holy day he has failed to listen to a holy sermon; and yet this is a major contribution to Christian piety, and that was what the church set up basilicas and Sundays for in the first place. And it often happens that while the priest is declaiming in church till he is hoarse, the gamesters in the brothel next door are making a rival hubbub with their drunken harangues; and this they can do with impunity by the good leave of the magistrates. What else does this prove, except that we have got our values upside-down, punishing actions forbidden by men more severely than what God forbids, and clinging more tenaciously to things which have the minimum of influence on our religious life than to those which of their own nature are pious and honourable.

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[8] Ie, 'inferior Dominicans' (*dominicanus* plus the pejorative suffix *-aster*)

[9] *Adagia* I iii 81

Yesterday, on the Sunday, that is, that they call Passion Sunday,[11] for the sake of my health I was going out for a ride with a friend before supper, and we were beguiled by the wonderfully fine weather. There met us a great crowd of young men,[12] not one of whom was sober. Most of them were reeling as they walked, and some from time to time fell over and were then helped up by men as drunk as themselves, while others were dragged along, moving their feet with difficulty while the rest of their weight was taken by the people who supported them. There was a little old man being carried high up on their shoulders like a parcel, his body folded over with his feet going first and his head hanging down behind their backs, and from time to time he vomited over the legs of those who were carrying him. In the old days, I imagine, that was how they were carried out to burial. Nor were the carriers much more sober than the carried. They had been drinking, they said, in a neighbouring village. God commanded that we should be sober, and forbade that we should be drunk; men have laid it down that we should observe a holy day. Here both laws were broken, and no one thinks any offence has been committed. If one were actually to set eyes on a Carthusian who had drunk more than was good for him, no one thinks that he has done anything wrong. But if the same man has eaten meat, this is an offence worthy of eternal imprisonment. What could be more hopelessly inverted than this scale of values?

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[10] For Erasmus' views on the observance of feast-days, see Ep 1039:190–209, and the *De esu carnium* LB IX 1199F–1201A.

[11] 22 March 1523

[12] This incident is also recounted in the colloquy Ἰχθυοφαγία, 'A Fish Diet' (ASD I-3 525–6 / Thompson 345–6), where it is said to have taken place on Palm Sunday rather than Passion Sunday (line 179). This letter, written the day after the event, is the better authority for the date.

Meanwhile, as we were gazing at this astonishing spectacle, we found ourselves within sight of the suburban property of that Sigismund[13] who was so cruelly put to death a short time ago. This was the house in which, just about this time a year ago, that disastrous dinner took place; and there are people who reckon that action among the principal crimes for which the wretched man paid such horrible penalties. For my part, I cannot possibly refrain from condemnation of his headstrong folly, although those who knew the man declare he was a lunatic and only at intervals in his right mind. Such a remarkable coincidence brought that action back into my mind, which aroused such a tragical uproar, and could not fail to be contrasted with the scene before us. Since this happens frequently and as a matter of course, no one thinks fit to take any measures against it, though at the same moment it profanes a holy day, ignores divine service and the word of God, and breaks the divine commandment. Drunkenness is the mother of quarrelling, bloodshed, adultery, and almost every crime, and a way of life so fraught with peril to the public good that at this day among the Saracens drunkards are liable to capital punishment. But all this time we priests cheerfully accept the support given by lay princes to our authority in putting our decrees into effect, forgetting all the time the old saying that mule scratches mule.[14] For we are obliged to support them in our turn when

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[13] Sigismund Steinschneider, a skilled surgeon, in whose house on Palm Sunday (13 April 1522) a company of supporters of the Reformation openly defied the Lenten fast by eating pork, thus setting off an uproar which lasted throughout the summer (see Ep 1293 n8). Both the bishop and the town council issued mandates against such flouting of custom and law. It was this incident which moved Erasmus to address the *Epistola de esu carnium* to the bishop (Epp 1341A:1306–13, 1274 n7). Almost a year later (22 February 1523) Steinschneider, a man given to rash utterances on many subjects, was executed at Ensisheim in Alsace for blasphemies against the sacraments and the Virgin Mary. See the *scholia* (1532) to the *Epistola de esu carnium* ASD IX-1 65–7.

[14] *Adagia* I vii 96

they claim as their own our rights and our property, when they take away our immunities, encroach on our benefices, and burden us with their exactions; this is what it means to accept the support of princes in ecclesiastical affairs. It is fair enough to boast that the Christian religion is at last flourishing nicely if, while our whole way of life is filled with ambition, brutality, avarice, disputing, fighting, manslaughter, warfare, plundering, quarrelling, usury, simony, fraud, perjury, adultery, lasciviousness, and theft, we are content to defend our reputation for piety by this criterion above all others,[15] contempt for which was the first clear proof the apostles gave that they had the courage to be Christians. Peter, before he had wholly put away Judaism, abstained from food which had been forbidden by the law of Moses; once he had had his lesson from heaven and developed the courage proper to the gospel, he ate whatever food he pleased.

And I would say this, dear Zasius my most learned friend, with no idea of encouraging those foolish people who think they show themselves men, and worthy of the gospel, if when there is no necessity they eat meat in defiance of the decrees or customs of the church, but to show how upside-down the public's scale of values is. Not that I suppose your magistrates, who are intelligent men with high standards, to be so superstitious that they would wish to stir up trouble for a man who was obliged by peremptory reasons of health to eat what he pleased, even if he had no licence from the pope. So I shall consider this rumour absolutely baseless until you write and tell me the facts. Apart from that, as far as my own attitude is concerned, I am so little tempted by good living that I should be glad to live perpetually on turnips and greens, provided such a diet would maintain my wretched body in good health. My only regret is that in this matter I have such a good excuse. I would rather pay the penalty ten times to the bishops for eating meat than pay the penalty once to the stone for eating fish.

The day I returned here a second diploma was delivered to me from the pope,[16] much more complimentary and in much warmer language than the first.[17] Besides which I send you a copy of a letter from a most open-minded divine, Theodoricus Hezius, the pope's principal secretary, so that you may know exactly how your friend Erasmus is placed.[18] Three days later I got a privilege for Froben,[19] which I had secured by writing to Ferdinand.[20] My

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[15] Ie, abstinence from forbidden foods

[16] Ep 1338

[17] Ep 1324

[18] Ep 1339

[19] See Ep 1341 n4.

[20] Ep 1323

letter arrived just in time,[21] for the next day he was preparing to leave. The prince was not even coming to the diet, except to bid farewell to the top people. He read my letter eagerly, recognizing at once the familiar name of Erasmus. Next day he brought forward the same business at the meeting, not without some complimentary remarks about myself. It was decided unanimously that Erasmus should have what he wanted; and not content with that, our excellent prince gave strict instructions to the chancellor to put the document through that same day, so that he could sign it with his own hand before he left. It was put through by Ulrich Varnbüler,[22] a man whom I find frank and friendly, and what is more, free of charge, contrary to the practice of these court officials. Shortly after, I received a letter from Ferdinand,[23] in which he also thanked me, and promised that he would reward my services. I suspect that the letter was composed by himself.

I answered[24] the pope and his secretaries yesterday by a safe hand[25] (for the emperor's court has particular business with the pope, and the man is genuinely friendly to me), but he was in a hurry; I took the risk however of writing even on the spur of the moment, especially as he asked in his letter for a speedy answer.[26] I have almost decided to stay here until next August, and then to go either to Italy, where I have an invitation from the pope[27] and several scholars,[28] or to France;[29] for something like the scent of peace salutes my nostrils. I had guessed this might be so on my own account; and I only hope my guess may not mislead me. The demands will be met, and an agreement has been arrived at between the princes.[30] It is better to lose part of what you have than to fight a war and lose your life and your possessions. I prefer peace at a price to war which will be more expensive still.

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[21] Here the narrative is clearly based on the information supplied by Pirckheimer in Ep 1344:123ff.

[22] Ep 1344 n27

[23] Ep 1343

[24] Ep 1352

[25] Ep 1352 n1

[26] Ep 1338:43–5

[27] In Epp 1324 and 1338

[28] The letter answered by Ep 1349 may have included an invitation.

[29] See Ep 1319 introduction.

[30] Since the fall of Rhodes to the Turks on 21 December 1522, Pope Adrian VI had redoubled his efforts to mediate a peace or at least a truce between Francis I and Charles V in preparation for a united Christian effort against the Islamic foe. In February 1523 and again in March, Charles informed the pope of his readiness for an armistice, while Francis conveyed the impression of a similar readiness. Erasmus, with his many contacts at the imperial court and in other high places, seems to have heard reports of what was afoot and to have based his sanguine hopes for peace on them. Soon after this letter was written, however, Adrian's efforts at mediation were undermined by King Francis' demand that Emperor Charles restore Milan to him as the price of an agreement; Pastor IX 169–83.

You will say at this point, I know, 'A genuine German[31] like you, what business have you with Frenchmen?' Not at all: I often have business with capons and hens.[32] But, joking apart, I am driven from Germany by the stoves and invited to France by the wine,[33] the supply of which here is uncertain. And I should have left by now, had not that excellent man Nikolaus,[34] the dean, who is the official of the bishop of Basel, given me now a third cask of Burgundy. And I did not understand his generosity. First of all he himself sent me a cask, meaning it to be a present. I accepted that, thinking I could either tolerate such great generosity or repay it. He ordered a second to be delivered as though I were going to pay for it. When it arrived, he refused the money. Another time, when he perceived that I was in danger, he arranged for them to bring a third. I offered his steward the money for it before the messenger left, and he replied that that could be dealt with when the wine came. When it arrived, I tried to make him accept payment for the two; but I couldn't get him to agree to accept a farthing. So this man's unheard-of and unlooked-for kindness to me who have done nothing to deserve it makes me most anxious to find some way of repaying such generosity. And so, if you think it of any value to learning that Erasmus should be still alive, and if my long stay among you is not unwelcome, you too are in debt to the dean's liberality. My trouble is incurable, but gets steadily worse as I get older. The physicians differ in their remedies. One lesson I learn from the facts, that my best defence against the trouble lies in the wine; and in this respect France is more fortunate. I shall, however, share myself between the two nations. My spirit will dwell in Germany and my body in France. Neither party will be jealous of the other, because the actual word[35] testifies that you are brothers.

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[31] On Erasmus' notion of his German identity, see CWE 3 xii and the index to that volume under 'Germany, Germans.'

[32] The old pun on *Gallus* (Frenchman), *gallus* (cock), and *gallina* (hen). Cf Ep 1341A:355–62.

[33] On the stoves, see Ep 1258 n18; on the wine, see Epp 1316 and 1319 introductions. This determination to leave Germany was strengthened by the disorders attending the Reformation and by the attacks upon him from the reformers, which continued throughout the year; see Allen Epp 1359:16, 1364:20–2, 1376:8–9, 1385:12, 1386:12–13, 1388:13. On 22 June 1523 Basilius Amerbach wrote to Bonifacius that Erasmus planned to migrate elsewhere 'sub Septembrem'; AK Ep 924:8–9.

[34] Nikolaus von Diesbach; Epp 1258 n17, 1342:504–7.

[35] Ie, *Germani*

When I was with you, you took an impression of my ring, which made me suspect that you meant to put up somewhere a representation of my emblem.[36] If I guess rightly, I do beg you, my dear Zasius, in the name of our friendship, let us have done with these vulgar practices, which are unworthy of educated men. If there is any point in personal emblems, enough of mine is already on record in my books. Besides which, you let fall once or twice words like 'chief' and 'hero.' I do not fail to see, dear Zasius, that this has no other source than your abundant affection for me. But that affection ought also to induce you to abstain from doing anything which will make your friend look ridiculous or involve him in ill will. Love for their children persuades parents to control that love and not give free rein to the affection they feel for a son, for fear of spoiling by indulgence one who ought to be corrected by severity. I have been laughed at for a long time and mocked by my clever critics as the 'thrice-greatest.' That is bad enough, without being laughed at in the future as 'great chief and hero of learning.'[37] For what little I am worth, I shall try very hard to do what I can. Those glorious names apply to you, who are so well equipped and polished and perfected with literary culture of every kind that I think you have everything needed for complete felicity except that it has not been your good fortune to live in some great city and famous university. Though wherever Zasius may be, it is his gifts that make him great. Even so, it makes a difference to one's fame, position, and chance of getting rich, whether one lives in Athens or Seriphus.[38]

Give my greetings to your esteemed rector[39] and with him to all the chief people and students of your university. I know how much I am indebted to them all. If I have no opportunity of repaying my thanks, at least I shall not lack opportunities to show that I have not forgotten. May Christ the Almighty long preserve your venerable years in health and wealth for the promotion of probity and humane studies. Farewell, from Basel, 20 [February] 1523.

It will be kind of you to let me know by letter if there is anything in which you think I could be of service to your magistrates. What they did for me[40] was far more than I deserved. The man who arranged that there should

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[36] Terminus; see Ep 604:4n.

[37] See Ep 1352 n7.

[38] An island in the Aegean, used by the Roman emperors as a place of exile for state criminals

[39] Theobald Bapst (c 1497–1564) of Guebwiller in Alsace, professor of rhetoric and later (1535) of law

[40] Evidently something more than the usual gift of wine (lines 342–3); cf Allen I 66:357–64.

be a proposal for a new present acted perhaps as one friend towards another, but he did something I did not welcome. The same thing was going to happen in Basel, when I lately returned here;[41] but I heard about it from Baer,[42] and resisted tooth and nail anything beyond the usual present of wine. Farewell once more.

1354 / From Claude Le Marlet Dijon, [March 1523?]

The manuscript of this letter (=Enthoven Ep 160) is in the Rehdiger Collection of the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.103).

Little is known about Claude Le Marlet (documented 1503–34), 'docteur ès droits' and 'avocat' of the Parlement of Dijon. Two orations and some other works are known to have been published. Allen assigned the date 'March 1523?' on the erroneous assumption that the Marletus of this letter was the Morletus (Antoine Morelet du Museau) of Allen Ep 1370:5. Since, however, there is no basis for assigning a more accurate date, the letter can be allowed to remain where Allen placed it.

Greeting. You will wonder, perhaps, why a man you do not know should write to you. But do not be surprised, he is no longer unknown, he is your man; for long ago I devoted myself to you. As a result, I was consumed with a very great longing to see you, and was even annoyed with my friend Jussellus,[1] because he had met you when I was not here, for I felt he had stolen a march on me in the joy of our meeting, which by mutual agreement we were supposed to share. For we had arranged to visit you together; and this I still greatly desire to do, nor shall I find the breezes blow favourably until I have seen you, and you have had the opportunity of making my acquaintance no less than I of making yours. Afterwards, however, since I could not visit you at leisure, I longed very much to write; but fearing that this might be thought impertinent, I restrained an eagerness you would hardly credit.

Overcome at length by this longing to know you, I could no longer postpone writing to you forthwith, compelled to satisfy my desire even at the price of my reputation. But so far am I from regretting what I have done,

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[41] In September 1522, after his visit to Botzheim at Constance; Ep 1316 introduction

[42] Ep 305:201n

1354

[1] Possibly the 'Jussellus noster' of Allen Ep 1760:6; otherwise unknown

that I care nothing what anyone may say, compared with your friendship. In this there will be a very great strength to me, if you do not think me unworthy of it; and since I see that everyone else aspires to it, I must try all the more to be worthy of it, and to be admitted with others to that society, the honourable society of your friends. For this I have developed such a longing that everywhere I heard the name Erasmus, Erasmus, my most beloved Erasmus. And if Erasmus has had any devotees, I too am of their number; and this, it seems to me, is my one claim to be regarded as a very learned man – my delight in your writings and my great affection for yourself. And so it will be for the future: I shall love you always and, though your name is already well known of itself on account of your learning, I shall proclaim it everywhere and praise and magnify it.

Farewell, from Dijon, far into the night.

Your servant Claude Le Marlet, your most obedient disciple

To Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, my revered master. In Basel

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1355 / From Joost Vroye Louvain, 27 March 1523

The autograph of this letter (=Förstemann/Günther Ep 5) was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). The letter is presumed to be Vroye's answer to Ep 1347: see the introduction to that letter.

Greeting. Sole glory of literature and leader of all learning, Neve's death – the saddest, most sorrowful, most heavy blow that could befall me – reminds me, since about eight years ago I suffered from a similar complaint, that I must do nothing and think of nothing of which I am not ready shortly to give an account to the most high God. As far as your business is concerned, our long-standing friendship requires that I should never fail to promote your interests, and so pray be quite convinced that it will be the greatest pleasure to me if I am ever blessed with an opportunity of doing anything for you. And so, as regards the request you make in your letter, I shall do my very best not to let you feel you lack the services of a man of good will and a friend. But the whole matter does not depend upon me, for others too are concerned in it, the physician[1] and the official of Bruges,[2] and other persons beside the heirs, who have in their hands the power to deprive us of all right to act, once they have agreed to accept the inheritance; from which, scenting danger, they have hitherto refrained, fearing that the debts may be heavier

* * * * *

1355

[1] Ep 1351 n15

[2] Identity uncertain. See Allen's note for two possibilities.

than the assets of the deceased. The family is not only not rich, but so poor that they have borrowed money on which they are living a pitiful life among us while they await the outcome; and so they are more greedy for the spoils and more impatient than is customary.

Concerning your library,[3] Neve had spoken vaguely about it in such a way that all his fellow-lodgers believed it to be his, except for a few papers which we discovered; but I hope, and at the same time I will do my best to see, that you are put to no inquiry on the subject. The cups I am quite convinced were yours; but how are you to persuade these very grasping characters that they are not covered by the agreement in which he puts on record that there is nothing left owing between you except mutual good will, or, if it does not cover them, that it equally does not cover the debt which they say you owe for your stay here, which in their opinion exceeds the value of the cups? So if you were to have some more definite evidence that you have paid for your stay here, I should advise you to produce that for preference. As for the wine, I am well aware that it was sent you as a present, for I have often heard that for the carriage alone you paid fourteen gold florins;[4] but if they say it has gone off (as they understood from the servants), how shall it be proved that it was the regent[5] let it go bad? We found the two chairs[6] of Brussels work, but they were both sold before your letter arrived. The litter of which you write I have not yet seen, but we have found the long table; and I only wish we could have found all these things (which we who are your friends here readily believe to be yours) in your possession rather than in his. I promise however to do all I can in this respect; but to enable us more easily to satisfy his friends, and the endless claims of these worthless people, if you have anything in your possession that might help to clear up this business, please send it either to me or to Goclenius[7] or to some other friend. Farewell, prince of scholars.

From Louvain, 27 March 152[2]

Your most devoted Joost of Gavere

To the prince not of theologians only but of all learned men, by me ever to be respected, Erasmus of Rotterdam. In Basel

* * * * *

[3] Ep 1351 n11

[4] If Florentine florins are meant, a sum then worth £4 13s 4d gros Flemish, or £3 3s sterling, or £29 1s tournois. See Ep 1295 n1.

[5] Neve; Epp 298 introduction, 1347

[6] See Epp 616:17–18, 637:13–14.

[7] Ep 1209 introduction

Ep 1270A / From Battista Casali Rome, spring (after 1 April) 1522

The manuscript of this letter, which was unknown to Allen, is in the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (MS G 33 inf I ff 137–138r). It was first published by Silvana Seidel Menchi as an appendix to her 'Alcuni atteggiamenti della cultura italiana di fronte a Erasmo' in *Eresia e riforma nell'Italia del Cinquecento* Miscellanea I (Florence and Chicago 1974) 69–133; see especially 94–7 and 129 (text of the letter). The letter has also been published in the French-language edition of Erasmus' correspondence, *La Correspondance d'Erasme* ed Aloïs Gerlo and Paul Foriers V (Brussels 1976). Although the existence of the letter was known to the CWE editors (see CEBR I 276), it was unaccountably omitted from the list of letters to be included in CWE 9. By the time the annotator discovered the oversight, the volume had already gone to press and there was no option but to insert the letter at the end of the volume. The translation is by Alexander Dalzell.

Battista Casali of Rome (c 1473–1525), who held a prebend at St Peter's basilica, was a poet, a participant in the Roman Academy (Ep 1341A n115), and a professor of Latin at the Roman university, the Sapienza. Erasmus had not met Casali when he visited Rome in 1509, but at some point had been made aware of his existence. Sometime after the publication of the paraphrase on Matthew (March 1522; Ep 1255), Erasmus sent a copy of the paraphrase to Casali along with a letter, now lost, the aim of which was evidently (lines 7–9) to enlist Casali's aid against Zúñiga (Ep 1260 n36), who was also teaching at the Sapienza (Ep 1260:191–2). Casali replied with this complimentary but rather reserved letter. By 1524 Casali's reserve had turned into open hostility, which he expressed in a brief but vitriolic 'Invectiva in Erasmum Roterodamum,' charging Erasmus with denigrating the Italian humanists and their Ciceronianism, and also with undermining the Christian faith. In a letter of 31 August 1524 devoted to a response to his Italian critics, Erasmus denied that he knew Casali and attributed the 'Invectiva' to Casali's friend Angelo Colocci (1467–1549); see Allen Ep 1479:28–32 and the articles on Casali and Colocci in CEBR I. Since Casali's letter has to have been written well before the 'Invectiva' of 1524, Erasmus' denial that he knew Casali before August 1524 must be a lapse of memory, which is easily understandable: Erasmus had never met the man; writing to him might well have been someone else's idea (see n1); and it is not even certain that Erasmus ever received Casali's letter.

Only an approximate date can be assigned. Line 2 indicates that the paraphrase on Matthew, which came off the press sometime between 7 and 21 March 1522 (Epp 1264:19–20, 1267:32–3), had been published 'recently.' Even if Casali's copy had been dispatched to Rome immediately upon publication, it is difficult to imagine him having replied until sometime after the first of April;

the earliest surviving letters acknowledging receipt of the paraphrase (Epp 1269–70) were dated 31 March and 1 April in Brussels, which is much closer to Basel than is Rome. Moreover, lines 20–1 seem to indicate that Erasmus had made mention in his letter to Casali of his campaign in the spring of 1522 to win the support of important personages, especially those at the imperial court, against those who had charged him with being a supporter of Luther; see especially Epp 1267 (21 March), 1269 (31 March, 1273–6 (21–3 April). Under the circumstances, the decision of Gerlo and Foriers to adopted Seidel Menchi's date, 'spring 1522,' to add the qualification 'after 1 April,' and to assign the number Ep 1207A is as good a solution to the problem of dating as can be devised, so we have decided to adopt it.

Your servant brought me your letter together with the work on Matthew which you published recently; it is a gift both worthy of you and most welcome to me, first because it comes from one whose learning I have always greatly admired and whose mind I venerate for the rich and scholarly harvest which it never fails to yield; and secondly because I appreciate the opportunity which it affords, and which I have long desired, to win your friendship, for you know the interest I take in your affairs. You say in your letter that you are harassed by people who treat you as a Lutheran and attack you with a cannonade of pamphlets.[1] In my opinion you have no cause to fear; for your life and character and writings will plead your case well enough: they will provide everyone with ample evidence of the gulf which separates you from Luther.

As for Luther himself, whom you think we should treat gingerly for fear of making the fire blaze up more fiercely, I have always disagreed with those who took Luther more seriously than his effrontery justified. I have come to the opinion that the best and most effective defence against him is silence. That surely is the proper way to deal with the matter: the whole business can easily be brought to a conclusion if, with no one to fight against, Luther becomes his own enemy and perishes on his own sword.

You plead for noble princes to help you against those who attack you as

* * * * *

1270A

[1] Although it appears from this general phraseology that Erasmus had mentioned no one by name in his letter, it is clear that Zúñiga was the principal object of his concern. Jakob Ziegler had informed Erasmus in considerable detail about Zúñiga's anti-Erasmus campaign in Rome (Ep 1260:159ff), that Paolo Bombace's efforts at defence had been ineffective, and that 'things were going downhill' (ibidem 212–15). This would likely have convinced Erasmus of the urgency of seeking allies in Rome (cf Seidel Menchi 94–5), and it is conceivable that someone in Rome suggested Casali to him as a likely prospect.

a traitor and a follower of Luther.[2] Please be assured that I shall always be your most enthusiastic defender: in the past, before a full meeting of the senate,[3] I resolutely countered the Lutheran calumnies which were hurled against you. Whatever zeal and effort and industry can accomplish, I shall boldly accomplish on your behalf. My most earnest prayer is to be worthy of Erasmus' respect.

* * * * *

[2] See Epp 1267, 1269, 1273–6, 1287, 1299, 1300.

[3] Hardly the Roman senate, which was a judicial body with no interest in Erasmus' views or Casali's opinion of them; cf Seidel Menchi 87 n128. Possibly some sort of academic senate at the Sapienza, although the annotator could find no evidence that the Sapienza had such a body. It is most likely, therefore, that Casali is referring to the college of cardinals, which was frequently called a *senatus* (see, for example, LB IX 385B). In his 'Invectiva' (see introduction) Casali boasts that among those who have been an appreciative audience for his eloquence are 'pontifices universusque senatus' (Biblioteca Ambrosiana Milan, MS G33 inf part 2, f 84r).

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TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS
WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED
SHORT-TITLE FORMS
INDEX

TABLE OF CORRESPONDENTS

1252 **To Udalricus Zasius** Basel, 4 January 1522 2
1253 **From Urbanus Rhegius** Langenargen, 4 January 1522 3
1254 **From Maarten Davidts** Brussels, 10 January 1522 5
1255 **To Charles v** Basel, 13 January 1522 6
1256 **From Juan Luis Vives** Louvain, 19 January 1522 11
1257 **To Conradus Goclenius** Basel, 6 February 1521/2 18
1258 **To a Friend** Basel, 9 February 1522 20
1259 **To Willibald Pirckheimer** Basel, 12 February 1522 22
1260 **From Jakob Ziegler** Rome, 16 February 1522 23
1261 **From Andrea Alciati** Avignon, 24 February 1522 36
1262 **To Johannes Erasmius Froben** Basel, 28 February 1522 37
1263 **To [Thomas Wolsey]** Basel, 7 March 1522 38
1264 **To Nikolaus von Wattenwyl** Basel, 7 March 1522 41
1265 **From Willibald Pirckheimer** [Nürnberg, beginning of March 1522] 43
1266 **From Udalricus Zasius** Freiburg, 20 March 1522 44
1267 **To Stanislaus Thurzo** Basel, 21 March 1522 45
1268 **To Willibald Pirckheimer** Basel, 30 March 1522 47
1269 **From Joris van Halewijn** Brussels, 31 March 1521/2 50
1270 **From Charles v** Brussels, 1 April 1522 51
1270A **From Battista Casali** Rome, spring (after 1 April) 1522 52
1271 **From Juan Luis Vives** Bruges, 1 April 1522 52
1272 **From Stanislaus Thurzo** [Kroměříž?] 10 April 1522 58
1273 **To Pedro Ruiz de la Mota** Basel, 21 April 1522 59
1274 **To Luis Núñez Coronel** Basel, 21 April 1522 61
1275 **To Jean Glapion** Basel, [c 21 April] 1522 64
1276 **To Jean de Carondelet** Basel, 23 April 1522 68
1277 **From Juan de Vergara** Brussels, 24 April 1522 69
1278 **To Andrea Alciati** Basel, 25 April 1522 73
1279 **From Leonhard Müller** St Georgenberg, 7 May 1522 75
1280 This letter has been redated and will appear in volume 14.
1280A **From Caspar Ursinus Velius** Vienna, c May 1522 76
1281 **From Juan Luis Vives** Bruges, 20 May 1522 84
1282 **To Ennio Filonardi** Basel, 21 May 1522 87
1283 **To Duke George of Saxony** Basel, 25 May 1522 89
1284 **To Nicolas Bérault** Basel 25 May 1522 90
1285 **From Johann von Botzheim** Constance, [26 May?] 1522 93
1286 **From Gerard Bachuus** Bruges, 27 May 1522 96
1287 **From Guy Morillon** Bruges, [c 27 May 1522] 99
1288 **From Andrea Alciati** [Noves, c 29 May 1522] 101
1289 **From Maternus Hatten** Speyer, 4 June 1522 103
1290 **From Wolfgang Faber Capito** Nürnberg, 5 June 1522 105
1291 **From Johannes Caesarius** Cologne, 14 June [1522] 107
1292 **To Conradus Goclenius** Basel, 16 June 1522 109
1293 **To Bonifacius Amerbach** Basel, 24 June 1522 110
1294 **To Pierre Barbier** Basel, 25 June 1522 111
1295 **To Matthäus Schiner** [Basel, c 25 June 1522] 112

1296 **From Conradus Goclenius** Louvain, 26 [1522] 113
1297 **From Jacobus Piso** [Prague, c June 1522?] 115
1298 **From Duke George of Saxony** Dresden, 9 July 1522 119
1299 **To Joost Lauwereyns** Basel, 14 July 1522 120
1300 **To Jeroen van der Noot** Basel, 14 July 1522 126
1301 **To the Theologians of Louvain** [Basel, c 14 July 1522] 129
1302 **To Pierre Barbier** Basel, c 14 July 1522 137
1303 **From Juan Luis Vives** Louvain, 14 July 1522 141
1304 **To Adrian VI** Basel, 1 August 1522 144
1305 **To Petrus Mosellanus** Basel, 8 August 1522 160
1306 **From Juan Luis Vives** Louvain, 15 August 1522 161
1307 **From Johannes Gallinarius** Breisach, 15 August 1522 164
1308 **From Wolfgang Faber Capito** Mainz, 17 August 1522 166
1309 **To the Reader** [Basel, c August 1522] 168
1310 **To Adrian VI** Basel, [c September] 1522 173
1311 **To John Fisher** Basel, 1 September 1522 175
1312 **To Juan de Vergara** Basel, 2 September 1522 177
1313 **To Duke George of Saxony** Basel, 3 September 1522 178
1314 **To Huldrych Zwingli** Basel, [3?] September 1522 183
1315 **To Huldrych Zwingli** Basel, 8 September 1522 186
1316 **To Konrad Heresbach** Basel, 18 October 1522 187
1317 **From Frans van Cranevelt** Mechelen 24 [October 1522] 190
1318 **From Antoine Brugnard** Montbéliard, 4 November 1522 191
1319 **To François de Tournon** Basel, 10 November 1522 193
1320 **From Herman Lethmaet** Ghent, 12 November 1522 195
1321 **From Jan Becker of Borssele** Louvain, 23 November 1522 197
1322 **From Jan Stercke** Louvain, 24 November 1522 199
1323 **To Archduke Ferdinand** Basel, 29 November 1522 200
1324 **From Adrian VI** Rome, c 1 December 1522 203
1324A **From Adrian VI** Rome, c December 1522 209
1325 **To Duke George of Saxony** Basel, 5 December 1522 212
1326 **To Heinrich Stromer** Basel, 5 December 1522 213
1327 **To Huldrych Zwingli** Basel, 9 December 1522 214
1328 **From Guillaume Budé** Paris, 14 December [1522] 214
1329 **To Adrian VI** Basel, 22 December 1522 218
1330 **To Jakob Ziegler** Basel, 22 December 1522 220
1331 **To Johann von Botzheim** Basel, 25 December 1522 223
1332 **To Christoph von Utenheim** Basel, [early January?] 1523 227
1333 **To Archduke Ferdinand** Basel, 5 January 1523 231
1334 **To Jean de Carondelet** Basel, 5 January 1523 245
1335 **From Johann von Botzheim** Constance, 7 January 1523 275
1336 **To Francesco Chierigati** Basel, 8 January 1522/3 278
1337 **To Willibald Pirckheimer** Basel, 8 January 1523 279
1337A **To Silvester Prierias** Basel, [mid-January 1523?] 280
1338 **From Adrian VI** Rome, 23 January 1523 283
1339 **From Theodoricus Hezius** Rome, 25 January 1522/3 285
1340 **From Duke George of Saxony** Dresden, 25 January 1523 288
1341 **To Willibald Pirckheimer** Basel, 28 January 1522/3 289

1341A **To Johann von Botzheim** Basel, 30 January 1523 291
1342 **To Marcus Laurinus** Basel, 1 February 1523 364
1343 **From Archduke Ferdinand** Nürnberg, 15 February 1523 401
1344 **From Willibald Pirckheimer** Nürnberg, 17 February 1523 402
1345 **To Herman Lethmaet** Basel, 21 February 1522/3 409
1346 **To the Nuns of Cologne** [Basel, c February] 1523 411
1347 **To Joost Vroye** Basel, 1 March [1523] 412
1348 **To [Georgius Spalatinus]** Basel, 11 March 1523 426
1349 **To Gianfrancesco Torresani** Basel, 18 March 1523 428
1350 **From Herman Lethmaet** Mechelen, 18 March [1523] 430
1351 **From Pieter Wichmans** Mechelen, 22 March 1523 432
1352 **To Adrian** VI [Basel, 22 March 1523] 434
1353 **To Udalricus Zasius** Basel, [23 March] 1523 441
1354 **From Claude Le Marlet** Dijon, [March 1523?] 452
1355 **From Joost Vroye** Louvain, 27 March 1523 453

WORKS FREQUENTLY CITED

This list provides bibliographical information for works referred to in short-title form in this volume. For Erasmus' writings see the short-title list, pages 466–9. Editions of his letters are included in the list below.

AK	*Die Amerbachkorrespondenz* ed Alfred Hartmann and B.R. Jenny (Basel 1942–)
Allen	*Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* ed P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and index
ASD	*Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969–)
BAO	*Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads* ed Ernst Staehelin 2 vols Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 10 and 19 (Leipzig 1927–34; repr New York-London 1971)
Bataillon	Marcel Bataillon *Erasme et l'Espagne* (Paris 1937)
Bietenholz	P.G. Bietenholz *Basle and France in the Sixteenth Century: The Basle Humanists and Printers in Their Contacts with Francophone Culture* (Geneva-Toronto 1971)
Böcking	Ulrich von Hutten *Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia* ed Eduard Böcking (Leipzig 1859–61; repr Aalen 1963) 5 vols
BRE	*Briefwechsel des Beatus Rhenanus* ed A. Horawitz and K. Hartfelder (Leipzig 1886; repr Hildesheim 1966)
CEBR	*Contemporaries of Erasmus: A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* ed Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher (Toronto 1985–7) 3 vols
CR	*Philippi Melanchthonis opera quae supersunt omnia* ed C.G. Bretschneider et al *Corpus Reformatorum* 1–28 (Halle 1834–60; repr 1963)
CSEL	*Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum* (Vienna-Leipzig 1866–)
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974–)
Enthoven	*Briefe an Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam* ed L.K. Enthoven (Strasbourg 1906)
Epistolae ad diversos	*Epistolae D. Erasmi Roterodami ad diversos et aliquot aliorum ad illum* (Basel: Froben 31 August 1521)
Ferguson *Opuscula*	*Erasmi opuscula: A Supplement to the Opera Omnia* ed W.K. Ferguson (The Hague 1933)
Förstemann/Günther	*Briefe an Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam* ed J. Förstemann and O. Günther, XXVII. Beiheft zum *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekwesen* (Leipzig 1904)

Gachard	*Collections des voyages des souverains des Pays-Bas* ed L.P. Gachard and C. Piot (Brussels 1874–82) 4 vols
Holeczek	Heinz Holeczek *Erasmus Deutsch* I (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt 1983)
Kaegi	Werner Kaegi 'Hutten und Erasmus: Ihre Freundschaft und ihr Streit' *Historische Vierteljahrschrift* 12 (1924–5) 200–78, 461–514
LB	*Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami opera omnia* ed J. Leclerc (Leiden 1703–6; repr 1961–2) 10 vols
LP	*Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII* ed J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner, and R.H. Brodie (London 1862–1932) 36 vols
Opus epistolarum	*Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami per autorem diligenter recognitum et adjectis innumeris novis fere ad trientem auctum* (Basel: Froben, Herwagen, and Episcopius 1529)
Pastor	Ludwig von Pastor *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages* ed and trans R.F. Kerr et al, 6th ed (London 1938–53) 40 vols
Pirckheimeri opera	*Bilibaldi Pirckheimeri ... opera politica, historica, philologica, et epistolica* ed Melchior Goldast (Frankfurt 1610; repr Hildesheim-New York 1969)
PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus ... series latina* ed J.P. Migne (Paris 1844–1902) 221 vols
Planitz	Hans von der Planitz *Berichte aus dem Reichsregiment in Nürnberg 1521–3* assembled E. Wulcher ed H. Virck (Leipzig 1899)
Reedijk	*The Poems of Desiderius Erasmus* ed C. Reedijk (Leiden 1956)
RTA	*Deutsche Reichstagsakten, Jüngere Reihe* (Gotha, Stuttgart, Göttingen 1896–)
Rublack	Hans-Christoph Rublack *Die Einführung der Reformation in Konstanz* (Gütersloh 1971)
Scheible	*Melanchthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und Kommentierte Gesamtausgabe* ed Heinz Scheible (Stuttgart-Bad Canstatt 1977–)
Schottenloher *Ziegler*	Karl Schottenloher *Jakob Ziegler aus Landau an der Isar: Ein Gelehrtenleben aus der Zeit des Humanismus und der Reformation* (Münster/Westfalen 1910)
Thompson	*The Colloquies of Erasmus* ed and trans Craig R. Thompson (Chicago 1965)
de Vocht *Collegium Trilingue*	Henry de Vocht *History of the Foundation and Rise of the Collegium Trilingue Lovaniense 1517–1550* 4 vols Humanistica lovaniensia 10–13 (Louvain 1951–5)

de Vocht *Literae ad Craneveldium*	*Literae virorum eruditorum ad Franciscum Craneveldium 1522–1528* ed Henry de Vocht Humanistica lovaniensia 1 (Louvain 1928)
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar 1883–)
WA-Br	*D. Martin Luthers Werke: Briefwechsel* (Weimar 1930–78) 15 vols
Zw-Br	*Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* 7–11: *Zwinglis Briefwechsel* ed Emil Egli et al / *Corpus Reformatorum* 94–8 (Leipzig 1911–35)

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-4, 5, 6 / CWE 30–6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI
Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae ... a Sanctio Caranza defensam LB IX
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam hispanos LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii: Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX
Apologiae contra Stunicam: Apologiae contra Lopidem Stunicam LB IX / ASD IX-2
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX
Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX
Apologia invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula*
Apophthegmata LB IV
Appendix respondens ad Sutorem LB IX
Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula*

Carmina varia LB VIII
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I
Christiani hominis institutum, carmen LB V
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] *Opuscula*

De concordia: De amabili ecclesiae concordia (in Psalmi)
De bello turcico: Consultatio de bello turcico (in Psalmi)
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / CWE 25
Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV

Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX
De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / CWE 24
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX
De praeparatione: De praeparatione ad mortem LB V / ASD V-1
De pueris instituendis: De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 26
De puero Iesu: Concio de puero Iesu LB V
De puritate tabernaculi: De puritate tabernaculi sive ecclesiae christianae (in Psalmi)
De ratione studii LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 24
De recta pronuntiatione: De recta latini graecique sermonis pronuntiatione LB I / ASD I-4 / CWE 26
Detectio praestigiarum: Detectio praestigiarum cuiusdam libelli germanice scripti LB X / ASD IX-1
De tedio Iesu: Disputatiuncula de tedio, pavore, tristicia Iesu LB V
De vidua christiana LB V / CWE 66
De virtute amplectenda: Oratio de virtute amplectenda LB V
[Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium: Chonradi Nastadiensis dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium] *Opuscula* / CWE 7
Dilutio: Dilutio eorum quae Iodocus Clithoveus scripsit adversus declamationem suasoriam matrimonii
Divinationes ad notata Bedae LB IX

Ecclesiastes: Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi LB V
Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras LB IX
Enchiridion: Enchiridion militis christiani LB V / CWE 66
Encomium matrimonii (in De conscribendis epistolis)
Encomium medicinae: Declamatio in laudem artis medicae LB I / ASD I-4
Epigrammata LB I
Epistola ad Dorpium LB IX / CWE 3
Epistola ad fratres Inferioris Germaniae: Responsio ad fratres Germaniae Inferioris ad epistolam apologeticam incerto autore proditam LB X
Epistola ad graculos: Epistola ad quosdam imprudentissimos graculos LB X
Epistola apologetica de Termino LB X
Epistola consolatoria: Epistola consolatoria virginibus sacris LB V
Epistola contra pseudevangelicos: Epistola contra quosdam qui se falso iactant evangelicos LB X / ASD IX-1
Epistola de esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium LB IX / ASD IX-1
Exomologesis: Exomologesis sive modus confitendi LB V
Explanatio symboli: Explanatio symboli apostolorum sive catechismus LB V / ASD V-1
Expositio concionalis (in Psalmi)
Expostulatio Iesu LB V

Formula: Conficiendarum epistolarum formula (see De conscribendis epistolis)

Hymni varii LB V
Hyperaspistes LB X

Institutio christiani matrimonii LB V
Institutio principis christiani LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27

[Julius exclusus: Dialogus Julius exclusus e coelis] *Opuscula* / CWE 27

Lingua LB IV / ASD IV-1
Liturgia Virginis Matris: Virginis Matris apud Lauretum cultae liturgia LB V / ASD V-1

Methodus (see Ratio)
Modus orandi Deum LB V / ASD V-1
Moria: Moriae encomium LB IV / ASD IV-3 / CWE 27

Novum Testamentum: Novum Testamentum 1519 and later (Novum instrumentum for the first edition, 1516, when required) LB VI

Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam: Obsecratio sive oratio ad Virginem Mariam in rebus adversis LB V
Oratio de pace: Oratio de pace et discordia LB VIII
Oratio funebris: Oratio funebris Berthae de Heyen LB VIII

Paean Virgini Matri: Paean Virgini Matri dicendus LB V
Panegyricus: Panegyricus ad Philippum Austriae ducem LB IV / ASD IV-1 / CWE 27
Parabolae: Parabolae sive similia LB I / ASD I-5 / CWE 23
Paraclesis LB V, VI
Paraphrasis in Elegantias Vallae: Paraphrasis in Elegantias Laurentii Vallae LB I / ASD I-4
Paraphrasis in Matthaeum, etc (in Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum)
Paraphrasis in Novum Testamentum LB VII / CWE 42–50
Peregrinatio apostolorum: Peregrinatio apostolorum Petri et Pauli LB VI, VII
Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum LB V
Precatio dominica LB V
Precationes LB V
Precatio pro pace ecclesiae: Precatio ad Iesum pro pace ecclesiae LB IV, V
Progymnasmata: Progymnasmata quaedam primae adolescentiae Erasmi LB VIII
Psalmi: Psalmi, or Enarrationes sive commentarii in psalmos LB V / ASD V-2, 3
Purgatio adversus epistolam Lutheri: Purgatio adversus epistolam non sobriam Lutheri LB IX

Querela pacis LB IV / ASD IV-2 / CWE 27

Ratio: Ratio seu Methodus compendio perveniendi ad veram theologiam (Methodus for the shorter version originally published in the Novum instrumentum of 1516) LB V, VI

Responsio ad annotationes Lei: Liber quo respondet annotationibus Lei LB IX
Responsio ad collationes: Responsio ad collationes cuiusdam iuvenis gerontodidascali LB IX
Responsio ad disputationem de divortio: Responsio ad disputationem cuiusdam Phimostomi de divortio LB IX
Responsio ad epistolam Pii: Responsio ad epistolam paraeneticam Alberti Pii, or Responsio ad exhortationem Pii LB IX
Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas LB X
Responsio ad Petri Cursii defensionem: Epistola de apologia Cursii LB X
Responsio adversus febricitantis libellum: Apologia monasticae religionis LB X

Spongia: Spongia adversus aspergines Hutteni LB X / ASD IX-1
Supputatio: Supputatio calumniarum Natalis Bedae LB IX

Virginis et martyris comparatio LB V
Vita Hieronymi: Vita divi Hieronymi Stridonensis *Opuscula*

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Index

Adriaans. See Hezius, Theodoricus
Adrian VI, pope: attitude towards Erasmus of 16n, 283, 387–8; hopes for reform by 54, 61, 186, 229, 231; letter from Aleandro to 86n; hopes for settlement of Hapsburg-Valois war by 92, 164, 194, 449n; and Baechem 121, 125, 333; movements of 137; silences Zúñiga 175, 222n, 225, 331–2; portrait of 204 *illustration*; Zwingli's attack on 214; Erasmus' correspondence with, mentioned 290, 315, 409, 432, 434, 448, 449; offers Erasmus preferment 357–8; and Nürnberg 404–5, 408; Lethmaet requests commendation to 430; and dietary laws 443
- letters to 144, 173, 218, 434
- letters from 203, 209, 283

Aesopus, Claudius, Roman actor 397
Africa, Africans: Latin usage in 147, 150; Arnobius' works in 151; ancient sects of 152; style of 255; circulation of spurious letter in 306. *See also* Carthage
Agricola, Rudolphus 294
Agrippa II, king of Judaea 398
Alber, Erasmus, *Judicium de Spongia* 336n, 339n
Alcalá, university of: Carranza and 71, 329; Zúñiga and 331
Alciati, Andrea, Amerbach and 110, 111
- letters from 36, 101
- letter to 73

Aldus. See Manuzio, Aldo
Aleandro, Giambattista 38n
Aleandro, Girolamo: professes to Vives his support for Erasmus 13, 15n, 54, 86; denounces Oecolampadius 21n; campaigns against Erasmus 38, 48–9, 101, 139, 161, 222n, 367; drafts papal brief 203 intro, 209 intro; opposes Luther 282; urges Erasmus to answer Luther 348; missing letter from 368; Erasmus visits 368n; Erasmus plans to travel with 369–70; silences Laurensen 371; irritates learned men 406
Alexander the Great 155, 189n
Algoet, Lieven, of Ghent, Erasmus' servant 17
Alps: impede travel to Rome 176, 435; poem written in 296; description of 379
Altomünster, Oecolampadius leaves 20
Alvarez de Toledo, Fadrique, duke of Alba 13, 56
Ambrose, St: text of, corrupted 248; conceals debt to Origen 265, 271; Jerome's view of 267; translation of Bible used by 272
Amerbach, Basilius, Erasmus greets 111
Amerbach, Bonifacius: collects letters 5 intro; quotes lost letter 36 intro; carries letter 73; praises of 74, 102

– letter to 110
Amerbach, Johann, Basel printer, edition of Augustine by 24, 168 intro
Ammonio, Andrea, of Lucca 422
Amoenus, Gervasius, of Dreux 301
Anderlecht, Erasmus' stay in 57, 66, 137, 366, 368
Andernach, Johann, delivers letter 143
Andrelini, Fausto 295
Antichrist 261, 398
Antonin, Jan, of Košice 363–4
Antwerp: Proost in 5, 12; Erasmus in 14, 138; Bertolph in 142, 162; Schrijver's recantation in 191; paraphases written in 399
Apostles, primacy of Peter over 105
Appennines 176
Apra, daughter of Hilary 266
Apuleius, African style of 255
Aquila of Pontus 268
Aquinas. *See* Thomas Aquinas, St
Arion 156
Aristophanes 99
Aristotle: not superior to Plato 52; paraphrased by Themistius 63; style of 256
– works of: *De anima* 314
Arius, Arians 131; in Arnobius 151–2; necessitated definition of Trinity 243, 250, 253; Hilary's writings against 249, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261; driven into heresy 438
Arnobius Afer: confused with Arnobius the Younger 144 intro, 152n; *Adversus gentes* 146n, 151n
Arnobius the Younger, on free will 399. *See also*: Erasmus, editions and translations: Arnobius the Younger
Arnold, Edward 299
Arnold, unidentified count in Constance 189
Arthur, prince of Wales 299
Atensis. *See* Briart, Jan
Athanasius, St: on Cyprian 26; Reuchlin's translation of 223; and Arians 253
Athenaeus 196
Athens 451
Attica, style of 255
Augsburg, Regius preaches in 4
Augustine of Hippo, St: Erasmus likened to 86; style of 147–8, 149–51, 255; and Donatists 152; mistaken attribution to 171; refuted heresies 206; swept into doctrinal inquiry 250; on free will 261; Jerome's view of 267; praises Hilary 268; translation of Bible used by 272; aids scriptural study 274; unable to avoid error 281. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Augustine, St
– works of: *Contra Cresconium* 255; *Contra litteras Petiliani* 255; *De civitate Dei* 148, 249; *De consensu evangelistarum* 32; *De doctrina christiana* 150; *De Trinitate* 148
Augustinian canons (canons regular), manuscript from 146n. *See also* Tournon, François de
Augustinian friars (eremites), and tumultuous reforms in Wittenberg 21. *See also* Kolde, Dietrich; Luther, Martin; Proost, Jacob
Austria. *See* Bregenz; Danube river; Linz; Mauthausen; Vienna
Auxentius, Arian bishop of Milan 258
Avignon 110n

Baal 24
Bachuus, Gerard, canon of St Donatian's, Bruges
– letter from 96
Bade, Josse, of Ghent, printer in Paris 298, 310, 316
Baechem, Nicolaas, of Egmond, assistant inquisitor: and trial of Proost 6, 12n; allusions to campaign against Erasmus of 38n, 40n, 222, 328n, 374, 386; passages challenged by 115n, 332–5; Erasmus seeks protection from 121–5, 126–9, 129–36; Erasmus complains of, to Rome 140–1, 281n; persecutes liberal

studies 271, 410; attacks Lethmaet 430;

Baer (Ber), Ludwig: commends Coronel 62; Lethmaet greets 197; examines letter 346n; and Erasmus 452

Balaam 342, 358

Balak 342n, 345

Bapst, Theobald, of Guebwiller, Erasmus greets 451

Barbara, St 415

Barbaro, Ermolao: errors of 313, 314; early death of 419

Barbier, Nicolas 100n

Barbier, Pierre: missing letter to 13, 101, 409; secures Erasmus' annuity 100; and papal brief 291n; missing letter from 388n

– letter to 111, 137

Basel: Erasmus, Latomus and Ursinus in (1518) 2nn; Erasmus returns to (Nov 1521) 10, 369–74, 382, 452; Oecolampadius moves to 20n, 167n; prodigy in 22; Clement in 56; Praus and Schaidenreisser in 75, 96; Ursinus leaves 77; Erasmus justifies stay in 89, 138, 374–7; Eppendorf in 90; uproar in 110n; Bertolph returns to 114; Zwingli visits 185 intro; Vadianus in 186n; Brugnard bypasses 192; public courier of 219; appeal to Rome from 220; Hutten in 226n, 389; rumour of Lutherans gathering in 277, 389–90; epigrams published in 296; Farel in 342n; Łaski in 343n; navigation to 380; Tournon in 385; Erasmus denies plans to settle in 384; Henry VIII's book in 395; letter from 402; Erasmus decides to remain in 438; dietary laws in 443

Bathodius, Lucas 373

Batt, Jacob 322

Beatus Rhenanus: Vives greets 17; and charges of Pelagianism 23n; and Johannes Erasmius Froben 37; Erasmus stays with 59 intro, 139; and Praus 75n; Botzheim's debt to 94; Hatten greets 104; edition of Tertullian by 151n, 313; and Gallinarius 166; accompanies Erasmus to Constance 187 intro, 188, 378, 381; Lethmaet greets 197; in Sélestat 227; Greek learning of 306; and *Senecae lucubrationes* 310n; instigates publication of *Spongia* 336n; accompanies Erasmus to Basel 374

Becker, Jan, of Borssele

– letter from 197

Béda, Noël, passages censured by 233n, 240n, 241n

Benedictines. *See* Blarer, Ambrosius; Briselot, Jean; Cologne; Müller, Leonard; Praus, Kilian; St Georgenberg

Ber. *See* Baer, Ludwig

Bérault, Nicolas 193, 194 – letter to 90

Bern 41, 308

Bernard of Clairvaux, St: admonished princes 182; *Sermones in Cantica Canticorum* 249

Beroaldo, Filippo, the Elder 314

Beroaldo, Filippo, the Younger 419

Bertolph, Hilarius, of Ledeberg, Erasmus' servant: carries letters to imperial court (April-May 1522) 59 intro, 65n, 69n, 85–7; returns with replies from Bruges, Louvain, Antwerp 99, 100, 109n, 114; back in Antwerp, Mechelen (July-Oct) 142, 162, 191; returns with news from Louvain (Nov) 199–200; presents paraphrase to Francis I 360; relieves Laurinus 365, 401

Bertrand, a nobleman (unidentified) 57

Besançon 431

Bible, Holy Scripture: Zúñiga's study of 32; Erasmus encouraged to expound 44; patristic commentaries on 153, 170, 398; refutation of Luther by 206, 394; pastoral duties in 228; Hilary's knowledge of 249, 265, 268–72; and theological

definitions 251, 253, 257, 259–60; mistake in Aldine edition of 429
- Old Testament: Psalms 135, 159, 256, 261, 268–73; Book of Wisdom 241; Job 266; Song of Songs 266; Isaiah 267; Genesis 268; Jerome's translation of 306
- New Testament: Romans 4, 347; Matthew 27, 268, 270; Ziegler proposes paraphrase of 32, 36; texts of, requested 104; popular language in 149; John 242, 250, 253; and classical literature 271, 303; Apocalypse 324; gift to Marck of 359. *See also* Erasmus, works of: *Annotationes; Apologiae; Novum Testamentum; Paraphrases*

Birchinshaw, Maurice: and Vives 16; greets Erasmus 17; missing letter to 143

Birckmann, Franz, Antwerp bookseller: money for 5; sends parcel to Erasmus 17, 20; at Frankfurt fair 18, 163

Blarer (Blaurer), Ambrosius 276n, 364

Blarer (Blaurer), Thomas 364

Blet, Antoine du, Lyon banker 342n

Blount, William, lord Mountjoy: and *De conscribendis epistolis* 91n; encouraged Henry VIII to read Erasmus 182; Erasmus stays with 299; dedication to 301; and *Adagia* 315–16, 357; marriage of 318; urges reply to Luther 348

Bodenstein. *See* Karlstadt, Andreas

Boeotia 156

Boerio, Giovanni and Bernardo 296n

Bogaert, Jacob 417n

Bohemia, Bohemians: unidentified magnates from 118; in adulterated version of *Colloquia* 307. *See also* Prague

Bohemian Brethren, *Oratio excusatoria atque satisfactiva* of 30n

Bologna: Erasmus' journey to (1506) 296, 350, 364; Erasmus' acquaintances in 419

Bombace, Paulo, secratary to Cardinal Lorenzo Pucci: opposes Zúñiga 32–3, 34; and Ziegler 36; among Erasmus' friends in Rome 377

Borgo, Andrea da 117

Borssele, Anna van, lady of Veere 322

Boskovice, Arkleb of 39n

Botzheim, Johann von (Abstemius): Erasmus stays with 187 intro, 188, 378–9, 382; and controversy with Hutten 339n; missing letter from 387
- letters from 93, 275
- letters to 223, 291

Brabant: Erasmus attempts to visit (April 1522) 59 intro, 375n; Erasmus wishes to return to 66, 385–6; Erasmus' departure from (Nov 1521) 137–8; clamour against Erasmus in 176, 328, 387, 437; remittance from 362. *See also* Anderlecht; Antwerp; Brussels; Louvain; Mechelen

Bracciolini, Poggio 271

Brandenburg, Albert of: urges Erasmus not to reply to Zúñiga 106n; missing letter from 122, 128, 139, 160; encouraged paraphrase of John 167n, 202, 232; and controversy with Hutten 336, 338; present from 359; Erasmus unable to visit 372

Brandenburg-Ansbach, Albert (I), margrave of 117

Brandenburg-Ansbach, George, margrave of 117

Bregenz 380

Breisach, Erasmus stays in 376

Brethren of the Common Life, Brethren of Nazareth 6

Briart, Jan, of Ath (Atensis): approved of Erasmus 122, 128; Erasmus' reply to 327–8; instigated Dorp's attack 326

Bricot, Thomas 147

Bridget of Sweden, St 228

Brie, Germain de: Erasmus greets 93; missing letter to 193; helps secure safe-conduct 194

Briselot, Jean, of Valenciennes, titular bishop of Beirut 228

Broeckhoven, Nicolaas van, of 's Hertogenbosch (Buscoducensis): Erasmus

defends 124, 140; imprisonment of 191n, 192, 432n
Brouwershaven 199
Bruges: Erasmus in (August 1521) 39, 163, 368, 395; Vives in 56, 85, 163; Bertolph in 96; *Colloquia* read in 97; manuscript of Augustine from 170n; Cranevelt leaves 190; *Antibarbari* recovered in 347; unidentified canon of 434n; unidentified official of 453
Brugnard, Antoine 107n
- letter from 191
Brunfels, Otto, *Responsio ad Erasmi Spongiam* 336n, 340n, 362n, 388n
Brussels: Birckmann visits 5; Proost detained in 6, 12; rumours concerning 14; Aleandro in 54; Vives in 57; Carranza's pamphlet in 86; Morillon in 99; Schrijver's recantation in 191; Erasmus in (autumn 1520) 345, (1520–1) 366, (summer 1521) 8, 368, 370; chairs from 454
Budé, Guillaume: Erasmus greets 93; missing letter to 193; helps secure safe-conduct 194; Gallic style of 254; and Francis I 385
- letter from 214
Burckhardt. *See* Spalatinus, Georgius
Burgundian Netherlands, Low Countries, scholarship of 313, 314. *See also* (provinces): Brabant; Flanders; Holland; (towns): Brouwershaven; Cambrai; Courtrai; Deventer; Liège; Middelburg; Tournai; Utrecht; Valenciennes; Veere
Burgundy: wines of 187 intro, 189, 194, 352, 364, 386, 450, 382–3, 384; Ferry de Carondelet from 431
Burgundy, Adolf of: Ep 90 from 322; urged completion of *De conscribendis epistolis* 91n; Becker and 198n; *Paraenesis* addressed to 354; Erasmus' ties with 385n
Burgundy, David of, bishop of Utrecht 359
Burgundy, Nicholas of, provost of Utrecht 199
Burgundy, Philip ('the Handsome'), duke of, archduke of Austria, Erasmus' *Panegyricus* to 299, 321, 354, 361, 375
Burgundy, Philip (I) of, bishop of Utrecht 319n, 359
Burgundy, Philip (III) of 198
Buschius, Hermannus (Hermann von dem Busche): Vives greets 17; Capito greets 109; and controversy with Hutten 336n; Erasmus tries to visit 372–3

Caesarius, Johannes
- letter from 107
Cajetanus (Tommaso de Vio), cardinal of San Sisto 67, 282
Calais: Erasmus plans to visit 65; imperial court in 99; Erasmus visits Henry VIII in 394
Calliergis, Zacharius, of Crete 420
Caluau, Jean, bishop of Senlis 217n
Calvo, Francesco Giulio, of Menaggio 37
Cambrai, conference at 319
Cambridge, Erasmus in 310
Camerarius, Joachim 339n
Caminadus, Augustinus Vincentius 130
Campano, Giovanni Antonio, bishop of Teramo 278
Campeggi, Lorenzo, cardinal 341n, 358
Campen, Jan van 19
Campester, Lambertus, adulterates *Colloquia* 305–9nn
Canal, Paolo, of Venice 420
Candace, queen 416
Canons regular. *See* Augustinian canons
Cantabria 164
Capito, Wolfgang Faber, adviser to Albert of Brandenburg: and Johannes Erasmius Froben 37; advises Zasius 45; Hebrew learning of 306, 307; Erasmus' suspicions of 340n; warns of machinations at court 367n; Erasmus visits 372
- letters from 105, 166
Caracciolo, Marino, of Naples, papal

nuncio to Charles v: Aleandro's ally at court 38, 49, 139, 161; encourages Erasmus to respond to Luther 348; Erasmus meets 368n, 395

Carinus, Ludovicus, *famulus* of Erasmus 18

Carmelites: Erasmus attempts to silence 101; dislike for 140; manuscript of Augustine from 170n. *See also* Baechem, Nicolaas; Briselot, Jean; Robbyns, Jan

Carondelet, Ferry de 431

Carondelet, Jean (I) de, chancellor of Burgundy 273

Carondelet, Jean (II) de, archbishop of Palermo: missing letter from 122, 224, 375; invites Lethmaet to court 195, 433; censoring in volume owned by 257n; dedication of Hilary to 315, 358, 409, 410, 431

- letters to 68, 245

Carranza, Sancho, of Miranda: Zúñiga's ally 34n, 112, 329, 437n; Vergara's estimate of 71, 72, 85, 86, 177; silenced 225n, 331. *See also* Erasmus, works of: *Apologia ad Caranzam*

- works of: *Carranzae opusculum in quaedam Erasmi annotationes* 143

Carthage, style of 255

Carthusians: convey rumour 110; Hutten extorts money from 337; and dietary laws 447. *See also* Riker, Dionysius

Carvajal, Bernardino de, cardinal of Santa Croce 31n, 222

Catherine of Aragon, queen of England 182

Catullus, Gaius Valerius 332

Caudine Forks 94

Ceratinus, Jacobus (Jacob Teyng) of Hoorn 110

Cerinthus, Cerinthians 242, 250

Charles v, emperor: arrests Proost 6; dedication of paraphrase to 50, 139, 202, 224, 234, 323, 375; hopes for reform from 61, 231; Erard de la Marck visits 85; and Louis of Flanders 98; annuity from 100, 194, 359, 362–3, 388; Baechem exceeds his instructions from 121, 125, 136; Ep 1270 from, mentioned 122, 128; Baechem attacks in the absence of 123, 126, 140; proclamation of, arms Baechem 127, 130, 133; movements of 137, 138; supports Erasmus 161, 185, 282; and Schrijver 192; at Cambrai 319; dedication of *Institutio principis christiani* to 321; reformers hesitate to attack 339; urges Erasmus to attack Luther 348, 376; Erasmus' oath to 385; and dietary laws 444–5. *See also* Hapsburg-Valois wars

- court of: efforts to discredit Erasmus in 12, 23, 43, 46, 49, 74; Erasmus attempts to return to 59 intro, 59–60, 62, 65, 67, 375–7; Erasmus explains his position on Luther to 60–9, 99, 139, 367; Lethmaet's impressions of 195; opposes Becker 198; Erasmus' attendance at 368; Erasmus circulates Ep 1333 in 402
- letter to 6
- letter from 51

Chierigati, Francesco, of Vicenza, bishop of Teramo: and privilege for Froben 290; activities in Nürnberg of 403–4; missing letter from 408

- letter to 278

Chièvres. *See* Croy, Guillaume (I) de

Christ. *See* Jesus Christ

Christian II, king of Demnark 39, 368

Christopher, St 415

Chrysostom. *See* John Chrysostom

Cicero, Marcus Tullius: and ancient Latin usage 148; solecisms in 272, 273; Tiro's services to 352; death of 419

- works of: *De officiis* 197; *De oratore* 249; *De senectute* 421; *Philippics* 54

Claudio, unidentified bookseller 221

Clava, Antonius 164

Clement, John: greets Erasmus 17; carries letter 56
Clement VII (Giulio de' Medici), pope: paraphrase dedicated to 324, 358, 361; suppresses Zúñiga's work 332; attempts to reconcile Lutherans 341
Clyfton, tutor to Boerio's sons 296n
Colet, John: Erasmus' dispute with 247n, 323; works written for 300, 303, 325; reminds Henry VIII of debt to Erasmus 360; overcomes his anger 413; death of 422
Colmar, Erasmus in 374
Cologne: Erasmus' meeting with Frederick of Saxony in (5 Nov 1520) 39; Dominican opposition to Erasmus in 66, 166, 171; outrage against clergy in 108n; unidentified courier from 141, 161; manuscript of Augustine from 142, 170n; Benedictine nuns in 325, 411; Erasmus and Łaski meet in (autumn 1520) 345; plague in 367; Erasmus bypasses (Nov 1521) 372
Compostela 134
Constance: Erasmus unable to visit 93; Praus and Schaidenreisser in 95; Erasmus visits (Sept 1522) 187 intro, 188, 194, 378–83; rumours of papal disapproval of Erasmus in 225
Constantinople 259
Constantius II, Roman emperor, Hilary's writings against 249, 257–8
Cop, Guillaume 296, 354
Cornelius, bishop of Rome 26
Coronel, Luis Núñez, of Segovia, attitude to Erasmus of 12n, 85–6, 95
- letter to 61
Coronius, Dionysius (Denis Corron) 194
Corte (Curtius), Pierre de, of Bruges 426
Corycius, Johannes, of Luxembourg 378
Cotta, Pietro, of Verona 421
Courtrai (Kortrijk), Erasmus' annuity in 100n
Cranevelt, Franz van: greets Erasmus 143; collects letters 178 intro; hears of dialogue on Luther 347n
- letter from 190
Crete, Cretans 420
Croke, Richard 320
Cronberg, Hartmuth von, visits Erasmus 226, 277n, 390
Croy, Guillaume (I) de, lord of Chièvres: and conference at Cambrai 319; death of 367
Croy, Robert de, bishop of Cambrai, Erasmus' enemies and 15, 101
Curtius. *See* Corte, Pierre de
Cyprian, St, bishop of Carthage: style of 255; Jerome on 267; translation of Bible used by 272. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Cyprian

Danube river, Ursinus' journey down 77–84
David, music of 156
Davidts, Maarten 433
- letter from 5
- letter to 20
Decius, Justus Ludovicus (Jost Ludwig Dietz), of Weissenburg (Wissembourg) 83, 324
Delft, Gillis van 328
Deloynes, François: Erasmus greets 93; missing letter to 218
Demas 178
Desmarez, Jean: encouraged translation of Euripides 297; Ep 180 to 321, 353; Erasmus greets 425
Deventer 294
Diesbach, Nicholas von, of Bern, introduces Erasmus to Burgundy wines 22, 189n, 382, 450
Dietz. *See* Decius, Justus Ludovicus
Diocletian, Roman emperor 152
Diodorus Siculus 271, 314
Dioscorus the physician 266–7
Doctors of the church: Luther differs from 210; disagree with one another 243; Erasmus 'contumelious' towards 250n; errors of 261. *See also* Duns

Scotus, John; Peter Lombard; Thomas Aquinas, St
Domenico, unidentified kinsman of Aleandro 86
Dominicans, Friars Preacher, 'Jacobins': oppose new edition of Augustine 53, 170; unidentified member double-crosses Vives 57; decree against Erasmus by 66; Erasmus attempts to silence 101; Schrijver, Broeckhoven and 140; stir up Zúñiga 175; danger from 185; on Immaculate Conception 264, 308–9n; oppose *Enchiridion* 322; Hutten attacks 337n; in Nürnberg 404n; and dietary laws 445. *See also* Cajetanus; Campester, Lambertus; Faber, Johannes; Holcot, Robert; Hoogstraten, Jacob of; Laurensen, Laurens; Passavanti, Jacopo; Prierias, Silvester; Pyrata, Antonius; Theoderici, Vincentius; Thomas Aquinas, St
Domitian, Roman emperor 34
Donatists 147, 152
Donato, Girolamo 421
Donauwörth, Ursinus visits 78n
Dorp, Maarten van: Zasius commends 44; Becker and 198; and disputes in Louvain 326, 328; and Wichmans 433
Dover, Erasmus' misfortune at 315
Drescher, Thomas 21
Dungersheim, Hieronymus 328nn
Duns Scotus, John; Scotists: Zúñiga and 34; on Immaculate Conception 264; not altogether rejected 274; in Colloquia 308; on free will 399
Düren, Erasmus passes through 372

Ebionites: Zúñiga thought to be an 34; and Gospel of John 242, 250; Hilary and 262, 263
Eck, Johann Maier of: Oecolampadius and 21; Ziegler's view of 28; defends papal primacy 67; irritates learned men 406
Edmondanus. *See* Baechem, Nicolaas
Edmund Tudor, son of Henry VII 299
Egmond, Filips van 200
Egmond, Joris van 200
Egmondanus. *See* Baechem, Nicolaas
Eli 415
Empedocles 34, 156
England, Englishmen: Augustine defaced by 24; suspicions of Erasmus in 68; imperial court in 69, 98, 139; pirate edition of *Colloquia* published in 91; Morillon in 101; at Antwerp fair 162; Vives plans to visit 163; Erasmus in 298, (1499) 299, (1505–6) 297, (1516–17) 278; translations of Lucian and 301, 319; unauthorized publication of Erasmus in 304; in *Colloquia* 307; Erasmus' work on Seneca in 310; and origins of *Adagia* 315–16; section of *Antibarbari* recovered in 347; Erasmus' ties with 386; Erasmus' absence from 394; Lethmaet plans to visit 409; learned men in 422; Wycliffites in 439. *See also* Calais; Cambridge; Lambeth; London
Epicurus, Epicureans, in *Colloquia* 123, 130
Eppendorf, Heinrich: Erasmus commends 90, 212–13; intercepts letters 178 intro; accompanies Erasmus to Constance 187 intro, 378, 381; rarely visits Erasmus 227; and controversy with Hutten 337n, 338n, 340n
Erasmus, Holbein portrait of *frontispiece*; the hands of *596 illustration*
Erasmus, original works
Adagia, allusions from: (I i 62) 295; (I i 81) 31; (I ii 25) 49, 289; (I iii 26) 218; (I iii 36) 389; (I iii 48) 421; (I iii 52–3) 413; (I iii 81) 445; (I iv 12) 372; (I iv 18) 33; (I iv 32) 8; (I iv 34) 438; (I iv 48) 248; (I iv 62) 329; (I v 1) 33; (I v 37) 274; (I v 56) 367; (I vi 1) 277; (I vi 15) 309; (I vi 19) 181, 394; (I vi 29) 154; (I vi 66) 166, 422; (I vi 67) 423; (I vi 69) 251; (I vi 94) 386; (I vii 72) 99; (I vii 96) 447; (I x 71) 91; (I xi 30) 383; (II i 1) 429; (II i 26) 213, 413; (II i 71) 229; (II ii 40) 320; (II iii 9)

27; (II iii 20) 235; (II iii 68) 423, 438; (II v 6) 9; (II ix 64) 334; (III v 1) 429; (III vii 21) 423; (III viii 21) 390; (IV iv 72) 266; (IV vi 35) 225

Adagiorum chiliades: edition of 1508 310n, 316; edition of January 1523 221n; expansions of, justified 351; proposal for Aldine edition of 429

- *Adagiorum collectanea* (1500): poems published with 296n, 299n; origin of 315–17
- *Annotationes in Novum Testamentum* 105
- *Antibarbari*: listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 321, 356; unfinished 346
- *Apologia ad Blasphemias Stunicae* (1522): origins of 32n; echoes of, in letters 139n, 331n; answer to 329n; listed in *Catologus lubrationum* 355
- *Apologia ad Caranzam*: origins of 71n; announced 160, 221; awaited 162; Wichmans' approval of 432
- *Apologia ad Fabrum* 326n, 355
- *Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae* (1522) 177n, 329n
- *Apologia ad Stunicae Conclusiones* (1524) 332n, 355
- *Apologia ad taxationes Stunicam* (1521): Vergara sends, to Zúñiga 70; Erasmus regrets writing 112; Erasmus disliked writing 329n; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 355
- *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum* 327n, 355
- *Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo'* 328n, 355
- *Apologia de laude matrimonii* 328n, 355
- *Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem'* 121n, 135n, 332n
- *Apologia invectivis Lei* 327n, 355
- *Axiomata pro causa Lutheri* 39n
- *Carmina*: *Institutum christiani hominis carmine pro pueris* 68n, 300n; to Gaguin 295nn; *Carmen de casa natalitia Iesu* 295nn, 355; *De senectute carmen* (*Carmen alpestre*) 296, 354; *Silva carminum* 298n; *Prosopopoeia Britanniae* 299n; *Michaelis encomium* 355
- *Catalogus lucubrationum*: works published with 33n, 333n, 335n, 365 intro; preparation of 169n, 221n; cited in notes 223n, 412n; title-page of *292 illustration*; text of 293–364
- *Colloquia*: edition of March 1522 37–8, 97, 112n; *Ἱππεὺς ἄνιππος, sive Ementita nobilitas* 90n; unauthorized edition of (1518) 91n; Baechem's objections to 115, 123–7, 129–34, 333; *De votis temere susceptis* 134n; *Apotheosis Capnionis* 176, 223; *Exorcismus, sive Spectrum* 275n; origins of 304; adulterated version of (Paris 1523) 305–9; *Convivium profanum* 307n; *Ἰχθυοφαγά, 'A Fish Diet'* 342n, 441 intro, 443n, 444n, 446n; *Inquisitio de fide* 348n; listed in *Catalogus lucubrationum* 353
- *Commentarius in psalmum secundum* 354
- *Consilium*: allusions to 46n, 275n, 437n; amplification of, planned 65n
- *Consolatio de morte filii. See Declamatio de morte*
- *Declamatio de morte* (*Epistola consolatoria, Consolatio de morte filii*) 319n, 354
- *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* 241
- *De conscribendis epistolis*: preface to 90–3; Bertolph announces, in Bruges 97; in preparation 112n, 229; unauthorized publication of 304; opuscula published with 318, 410n; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 352
- *De contemptu mundi* 318, 251n
- *De copia* 303, 346, 352
- *De immensa Dei misericordia*: origins of 325; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354; works published with 411 intro
- *De libero arbitrio* 339n

- *De morte subita* 354, 412
- *De pueris instituendis* 346n
- *De puero Iesu* 295n, 325
- *De ratione studii* 304, 352
- *De tedio Iesu* 323n
- *Dialogus bilinguium ac trilinguium* 19n
- *Dialogus Charontis et Alastoris* 354
- *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* 240n
- *Ecclesiastes*, preparation of, interrupted 176, 198n, 253, 347n
- *Elenchus in N. Bedae censuras* 240n
- *Enarratio in primum psalmum* 324n, 354
- *Enchiridion*: echo of, in letter 239; and charges of Pelagianism 23n; origin of 321–2; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354; Colet reads 414
- *Encomium matrimonii* 318n, 328n
- *Encomium medicinae* 318, 353
- *Epigrammata* 296n
- *Epistola de esu carnium*: preparation of 62n; works printed with 71n; origins of 111n; criticisms of 281n; Theoderici attacks 335n; publication of 346; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 355; parallels to, in Ep 1353 443n, 444n, 446n, 447n
- *Epistolae ad diversos*, Erasmus regrets publication of 74, 317; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 353
- *Exomologesis*: letters and works published with 173 intro, 283 intro, 324n, 332n, 412 intro; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 323, 354; Theoderici attacks 335n
- *Expostulatio Iesu* 295n
- *Institutio principis christiani*: dedication to Charles v 51, 359, 375; Ferdinand reads 201, 235; origins of 321; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354
- *Julius exclusus* 19n
- *Liturgia Virginis Matris* 355
- Lucubrationes, Lucubratiunculae 321n, 323n, 324n
- *Methodus. See Ratio verae theologiae*
- *Moria*: echoes of, in letters 34n, 219n; origin of 320; Dorp's attack on 326; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354; Laurensen attacks 370
- *Obsecratio ad Virginem Mariam* 322n
- *Opuscula aliquot* 300n, 309nn
- *Oratio episcopi* 319n
- *Paean Virgini Matri dicendus* 322n
- *Panegyricus* 299n, 361; Charles v mentions 51, 375; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354; Ep 180 published with 321, 353
- *Parabolae sive similia*: new edition of 112n; origins of 317; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 353
- *Paraclesis*: influence of 4; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354
- *Paraphrases* (general): origins of 8; and 4th edition of *Novum Testamentum* 312; series of, outlined 323–4; passages in, disliked by Baechem 332–5; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354; on Roman primacy 397n; *Matthew*: dedication of 6–11; title-page of 7 *illustration;* completion of, reported 23, 41, 46, 97; reception of, by Charles v 50, 51–2, 202, 224, 234, 359; reception of, at court 63, 139, 374–5; preface of, translated 95; Albert of Brandenburg praises 167; Schiner encourages 232; *Mark* 324, 360n; *John*: Erasmus encouraged to undertake 167; in preparation 176n, 221n, 290; dedicated to Ferdinand 202, 224, 231–45; title-page of 230 *illustration;* Ferdinand responds to 402; *Acts* 358, 398n; *Epistles*: folio of 1522 46; shown to Charles v 50; rumours of similar paraphrase by Melanchthon 180n; *Romans*, on free will 43, 49, 398–400; *Corinthians* 359; *Ephesians* 358
- *Paraphrasis in tertium psalmum* 324n, 354
- *Precatio ad Virginis filium Iesum* 322
- *Precatio dominica* 324n, 354
- *Progymnasmata* 298n

- *Querela pacis* 319–20, 354, 359
- *Ratio verae theologiae*: published with other works 4n, 411 intro; editions of 325; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354
- *Responsio ad annotationes Lei* 327n, 328n
- *Spongia*: on Aleandro 38n, 368n; on meeting with Frederick of Saxony 39n; on Latomus 223n; on visit from Hutten 226n; Erasmus' *apologia* for 335–42; dialogue on Luther mentioned in 348n; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 355; on charges against Erasmus 367n
- *Supputatio* 233n, 240n, 241n
- *Syntaxis* (*De constructione*) 352
- *Virginis et martyris comparatio* 325, 355, 411 intro
- *Vita Hieronymi* 306n

Erasmus, editions and translations
- Arnobius the Younger *Commentarii in Psalmos*: in preparation 104, 112n; dedication of, to Adrian VI 144–59, 283, 284, 315, 357; covering letter for 173–5; rumours of pope's dissatisfaction with 203 intro; reception by Adrian VI of 205, 209
- Augustine, St: edition awaited 4, 24, 430; Vives' work on 14, 16–18, 52–4, 87, 141–2, 162, 350n; preface to 16–73; edition described 349–50; oppositon to 370
- Cato (spurious, 3rd century) *Catonis praecepta* (*Dicta Catonis*) 68, 134, 309, 354
- Cicero *De officiis* 354
- Cursius Rufus, Quintus *History of Alexander the Great* 356
- Cyprian, St: suggested improvements to 26–7; Vives praises 141n; emendations in 172; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 315, 356; preface to 353, 358
- Euripides *Hecuba et Iphegenia* 297–8
- Hilary, St: edition awaited 4; Hatten sends manuscript for 104; in preparation 221n, 229; dedicatory preface of 244 *illustration*; dedication of 245–74, 409, 431; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 315, 356
- Isocrates: *De institutione principis* (*De regno*) 354; exhortation *Paraenesis* 354
- Jerome, St: edition praised 4, 141n; suggested improvements of 27–8; Zúñiga attacks 70, 104; stimulated work on Augustine 169, 170, 171; revision of 312; listed 356
- Libanius *Aliquot declamatiunculae* 353
- Lucian *Luciani opuscula* 300–1, 319, 353
- *Novum Testamentum* 66; origin and editions of 311–12; praise for Hutten in 336; *apologiae* included within 335; on Roman primacy 397n; 1st edition (1516): Baechem's attacks on 134–5; Dorp and Lee's attacks on 326; first attack on 328; dedication of 357; 2nd edition (1519): Zúñiga prepares refutation of 34, 70; criticized by Carranza 85; 3rd edition (1522): announced to Thurzo 46; brings Erasmus to Basel 137, 369, 374; delays edition of Augustine 168 intro; 4th edition (1527): inspired by paraphrases; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 355
- Ovid *Commentarius in Nucem Ovidii* 310
- Paul, St, commentary on Epistle to the Romans: awaited 26; remains unfinished 347
- Plutarch, translations from *Moralia* 302–3, 354, 359; *De discrimine adulatoris et amici* 360
- Prudentius, hymns of 310, 354
- Publilius Syrus *Mimi Publiani* 41n, 134, 309; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 354
- Seneca *Senecae lucubrationes* 310; listed in *Catologus lucubrationum* 356

- *Septem sapientum celebria dicta* 309
- Suetonius, included with *Historiae Augustae scriptores* 314
- Theodorus of Gaza *Grammaticae institutionis libri duo* 304, 352
- Valla, Lorenzo *Adnotationes* on the New Testament 311

Erasmus, St 415

Este, Ippolito d', cardinal, and Ziegler 30

Etna, Mount 34

Eucherius, St, bishop of Lyon 254

Euripides *Orestes* 424

Eusebius, St, bishop of Caesarea 148, 271

Faber, Johannes 55n. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Consilium*

Fabri, Johannes, vicar-general of Constance: Ziegler's opinion of 28–9; Erasmus greets 112; delivers letter 203 intro; conveys papal message to Erasmus 208; missing letter to 227; preaches against Luther 276–7; and Hezius 287; warns Erasmus of Lutherans' tactics 339; listed among Erasmus' friends in Rome 377

Farel, Guillaume 342n, 358n

Fathers of the church: respect due to 6; Erasmus' compared to 103; errors of 153; on Psalms 158; Luther differs from 206, 277; were reluctant to define faith 243, 257, 259; Thomas and Scotus drew on 274; little read in Rome 329. *See also* Ambrose; Arnobius the Younger; Athanasius; Augustine; Cyprian; Eucherius; Eusebius; Gregory I; Gregory of Nazianzus; Hilary; Irenaeus; Jerome; John Chrysostom; Lactantius; Origen; Tertullian

Faustus of Milevis 172

Felix, Marcus Antonius, procurator of Judaea 398

Ferdinand of Hapsburg, archduke of Austria: Vives and 15, 56; dedication of paraphrase to 224, 290, 360, 361; Ep 853 to 353; and privilege for Froben 406, 448–9
- letters to 200, 231
- letter from 401

Ferrara, Erasmus in 346

Festus, Porcius, procurator of Judaea 398

Fevijn, Jan van, canon of St Donatian's, Bruges: greets Erasmus 143; letter from Cranevelt to 191; and dialogue on Luther 347

Filelfo, Francesco 297, 313

Filonardi, Ennio, bishop of Veroli, papal nuncio in Switzerland: welcomes Erasmus 188; missing letter from 363
- letter to 87

Fisher, John, bishop of Rochester: missing letter to 39, 43; encourages paraphrase on John 202, 232; encourages *Ecclesiastes* 229
- letter to 175

Fisher, Robert 91

Flanders: Erasmus the glory of 98; brought low by war 190. *See also* Bruges; Courtrai; Ghent

Flanders, Louis of, lord of Praet: shown letter 86; devoted to Erasmus 97; greets Erasmus 99

Florentius, Jerome's letter to 257

Fortiguerra, Scipione 419

Fortunatus, Venantius 266n

Fortuné, Robert 245 intro

France, Frenchman: corrupted *Passio beati Cypriani* 26; Glareanus returns from 41; language of 149; Erasmus invited to 176, 384–6; Erasmus plans to visit 194, 449–50; Campester's homage to 307; Erasmus' continuing support in 383; possibility of travel through 435. *See also* Appennines; Avignon; Gaul; Lyon; Paris; Rhône; Saint-Maur; Sélestat; Trier

Francis I, king of France: offers Erasmus safe-conduct 176, 193–4, 216, 385; promotes Budé 215; at Cambrai 319; dedications to 324, 360, 409. *See also* Hapsburg-Valois wars

Franciscans (Minorites): on Immaculate Conception 309n; in Nürnberg 404n; detain Proost 432n; and dietary laws 445. *See also* Duns Scotus, John; Glapion, Jean; Kolde, Dietrich; Pellicanus, Conradus; Standish, Henry; Vitrier, Jean
Frankenthal, manuscript from 146
Frankfurt am Main: Birckmann at fair in 18, 163; Erasmus' belongings in 65; fair in 279; Erasmus pays Froben in 362
Frederick of Saxony. *See* Saxony Frederick III of
Freiburg: Erasmus invited to 2; conflict between town and university of 3n, 45; Erasmus visits (March 1523) 188n, 189
Froben, Hieronymus, Hatten greets 104
Froben, Johann, Basel printer: Ziegler and 36, 223; Hatten greets 104; Vives greets 144; imperial privilege for 201, 289–90, 406–8, 448; unidentified kinsman of 275; Erasmus' financial relations with 362–3
- and printing of Erasmus' works 62, 96; Augustine 17, 52, 142, 163, 173; Cyprian 27; Arnobius 154; New Testament 311; *Adagia* 317, 429; *Epistolae ad diversos* 317; instigates publication of *Spongia* 336n
Froben, Johannes Erasmius: education of 189; dedication of *Colloquia* to 305
- letter to 37
Fuggers, banking family of Augsburg, and Hutten's Febris 94

Gabriel, angel 295n
Gaguin, Robert 295
Gallinarius, Johannes (Johannes Henner or Henlin), of Heidelberg, Erasmus stays with 59 intro, 376–7
- letter from 164
Gattinara, Mercurio Arborio di, grand chancellor to Charles V: receives Ep 1150 84; missing letter from 86, 122, 128, 224, 368, 375
Gaul: Latin usage in 147; style of 253, 254, 255; Hilary the light of 273
Gaza. *See* Theodorus of Gaza
Gennadius of Marseilles *Catalogus* 263
Georg, a messenger: dispatched from Basel (June 1522) 109, 110n, 114; in Louvain (July) 142, 143, 161
George of Saxony. *See* Saxony, George of
George of Trebizond. *See* Trebizond, George of
Germany, Germans: obstinacy of 10; stoves in 22, 23, 41, 138, 188, 189, 373, 384, 385, 390, 435, 450; Eck's standing in 28; vices of 31; slandered by foreigners 35; injudicious language of 160; Henry VIII a model for 165; Erasmus claims ignorance of language of 182n, 392; Brugnard ignorant of language 192; trustworthiness of 310n; Erasmus rumoured to be hiding in 368, 374; learned societies in 371; warrior bishops in 379; attempts to pacify 405; grievances of 408; support for Luther in 436. *See also* Hapsburg-Valois wars; (regions): Austria; Bohemia; Saxony; (towns): Breisach; Cologne; Donauwörth; Düren; Frankenthal; Frankfurt; Freiburg; Ingolstadt; Kelheim; Lauingen; Passau; Regensburg; Sickingen; Speyer; Strasbourg; Stuttgart; Tübingen; Ulm; Worms; (rivers): Danube; Lech; Neckar; Rhine
- Erasmus' standing in: Erasmus' welcome in 3, 17, 371–4, 378–84; rumours of Erasmus' support for Luther in 12, 14; untrustworthy letters from 22; Erasmus' influence on Luther's followers in 40, 64, 282; Erasmus distrusted and threatened by 65, 68; fears for Erasmus' safety in 66, 372, 402; Erasmus' popularity in 98, 386, 436; Erasmus loses friends in 122, 127, 318, 389, 422; cruel reception of works in 137; Erasmus a German 450

Ghent 164
Gillis, Pieter: and Bertolph 19, 143; and Erasmus' annuity 100; arrest of, rumoured 110, 114; and Goclenius 142; and Schrijver 164; fears being suspected of Lutheranism 191; and *Parabolae* 317; and Wichmans 433
Glapion, Jean, personal confessor to Charles v: attitude to Erasmus of 12; Erasmus urged to write 14; urges action against Oecolampadius 21n; circulates letters and paraphrase 50, 100, 139, 374; missing letters from 122, 128, 139, 224, 348, 376; Erasmus misses meeting with 138; death of 200
- letter to 64
Glareanus, Henricus (Heinrich Loriti of Glarus): Erasmus praises 41; marriage of 189; Lethmaet greets 197
Goclenius, Conradus (Conrad Wackers of Mengeringhausen): and Vives 142, 143, 161, 162; and Erasmus' affairs in Louvain 200, 454; and Wichmans 433
- letters to 18, 109
- letter from 113
Grapheus, Cornelius (Cornelis Schrijver), of Aalst, imprisonment and recantation of 124n, 140, 164, 191n, 192, 432
Greek: Budé's lexicon of 216, 218n; Hilary's knowledge of 268–72; Erasmus' early study of 297, 301, 303; epithets in 300; grammar of 304; additions to *Adagia* from 316; study of, encouraged by Erasmus' New Testament 312; lectures in 420
Gregory I ('the Great'), St 133, 149
Gregory of Nazianzus, St *De theologia libri quinque* 161n
Greiffenklau, Richard von, archbishop of Trier 372n
Grimani, Domenico, cardinal 358
Grocyn, William 297–8, 422
Gronsselt, Gerard van 417n
Grüninger, Johann 165n
Gualthierot, François 192
Guldenmünster. *See* Pyrata, Antonius
Gundelius, Philipp, of Passau 83

Haio Herman, of Emden 112, 378
Halewijn, Joris van: Erasmus urged to write 14; Ep 1269 from, mentioned 224, 375
- letter from 50
Hapsburg-Valois wars: allusion to, in dedication to Charles v 11; disrupt Erasmus' travel (to Louvain) 19n, (to France) 176, 193 intro, 385, (to Rome) 194, 382; Erasmus deplores 89, 92; hopes for mediation of 155, 164, 395, 449n; treaties against France 163n; effects of, in Flanders 190; disrupt Erasmus' annuity 363; Francis I's attempts to regain Milan 369, 449; Sickingen's losses in 370n; and dedication of Hilary 409
Harst, Karl: greets Erasmus 115; travel plans of 142, 143, 161; accompanies Erasmus to Cologne 372
Hartung, Johann 441 intro
Hatten, Maternus, vicar and precentor at Speyer 25 intro
- letter from 103
Hattstein, Marquard von, canon at Mainz 372
Hebrew: Zúñiga's study of 32; Hilary's knowledge of 268; Jerome's translations from 306
Hedio, Caspar (Kaspar Heyd), of Ettlingen, greets Erasmus 167
Heems, Jan, of Armentières, Erasmus greets 426
Heliodorus 269
Hem 295n
Henner, Henlin. *See* Gallinarius
Henry VII, king of England 296n
Henry VIII, king of England: Charles v praises Erasmus to 139, 375; Vives dedicates Augustine to 141; supports Erasmus 161; Lethmaet wishes to visit court of 196; Erasmus' first visit to 299; Erasmus' dedica-

tions to 302, 324, 360; at Cambrai 319; encourages commentary on Psalms 324n; Erasmus' debt to 385
- works of: *Assertio septem sacramentorum*: Erasmian style of, noted 68, 105–6, 119; read with pleasure 104; praised by Gallinarius 165; Erasmus' letters published with 165; Erasmus denies writing 181, 394–5. *See also* Luther, works of: *Contra Henricum regem Angliae*

Hercules: madness of 12; labours of 19, 221, 348, 424; rescued Theseus 191; torn by vice and virtue 197
Heresbach, Konrad
- letter to 187

Herman, Haio. *See* Haio Herman
Hermonymus, Georgius, of Sparta 301
Herod, king of the Jews 415
Herodotus 314
Hessels, Ghisbert, town physician of Saint-Omer 318n
Heyd, Kaspar. *See* Hedio, Casper
Hezius, Theodoricus (Dirk Adriaans of Heeze), secretary to Adrian VI: drafts papal letters 203 intro, 209, 285, 291n, 388n; silences Zúñiga 225n; Ep 1339 from 448
- letter from 285

Hilary, bishop of Arles 263
Hilary, deacon of Rome 267n
Hilary, St, bishop of Poiters 241, 399. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Hilary
Hillen, Michaël 354
Hohenlandenberg, Hugo von, bishop of Constance: welcomes Erasmus 188; present to 223; Zwingli's reply to 225; Erasmus greets 364; invites Erasmus to dinner 379
Holcot, Robert 147
Holland, Hollanders: Erasmus the glory of 98; Baechem attacks Erasmus in 135; dullness of 225; in *Colloquia* 307. *See also* Hem; Rotterdam
Hollonius, Lambertus, of Liège 91
Holy Spirit: inspired Fathers 6, 206; sin against 9; and theological controversy 44, 401; wraps heavenly wisdom in metaphor 158; Hilary on 247, 248, 256, 258–9, 261–2, 271
Homer: Horace on 152; Socrates quoted 251; epithets in 300
- works of: *Iliad* 98, 218, 236, 390, 423

Hoogstraten, Jacob of: stirs up trouble for Erasmus 38n, 136, 166, 222; attacks humanities 125; Albert of Brandenburg dislikes 167; Ep 1006 to, mentioned 282, 335; rumoured to have burned Erasmus' books 387; irritates learned men 406
Horace, style of 255
- works of: *Ars poetica* 152, 320; *Epistles* 92; *Satires* 219

Hovius, Johannes, Erasmus' servant 17, 430n
Hugenoys, Lievin, abbot of St Bavo's at Ghent, greets Erasmus 56
Hulst, Frans van der, head of Netherlands Inquisition 124n, 410, 433
Hummelberg, Michael, of Ravensburg: greetings exchanged with 4, 227n, 364; reports rumours in Cologne 66n; and Erasmus' invitation to Zürich 183 intro; visits Erasmus 188, 381
Hungary: Ziegler leaves 30; hospice of, in Rome 36; appeal for aid to 278n
Hus, Jan 380, 391
Hutten, Ulrich von: Erasmus' quarrel with 90n, 317, 335–9, 341–2, 388n; Erasmus declines to meet with 226, 277, 389; death of 423
- works of: *Febris* 94

Inghirami, Tommaso (Phaedrus), of Volterra 421
Ingolstadt, Ursinus visits 79
Ionia 156
Irenaeus, St, bishop of Lyons 243n
Ireland 383
Ismenias of Thebes 156
Italy; Italians: Clement travels to 17,

56; manuscript of Jerome from 27; support Zúñiga 70; script of 84; attack Erasmus 87; Erasmus the prince of 98; Mosellanus' trip to 160; fine words of 276; Erasmus' visit to (1506–9) 278, 297, 298; revival of letters in 293–4; new edition of Seneca from 311; scholarship of 313–14; Erasmus proposes to visit 381, 449; Erasmus' continuing support in 383; Hovius in 430n; dietary laws in 443. *See also* Bologna; Ferrara; Milan; Padua; Rome; Siena; Trent; Venice

James IV, king of Scotland 299
Jerome, St: aids scriptural study 11, 274; on Cyprian 26; balanced judgment of 63; Erasmus likened to 86, 102; revised Psalter 135; on Arnobius 148, 151, 152; admonished princes 182; refuted heresies 206; text of, corrupted 246; on Hilary 253, 255–6, 267, 268, 269, 270; on marriage 260; unable to avoid error 281; spurious letter of 306; on free will 398, 399; great age of 418; Luther's view of 427n
– works of: *Apologia contra Rufinum* 306; *Catalogus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum* (*De viris illustribus*) 258, 263, 265, 266; commentaries on the prophets 249, 265–6; *Dialogus contra Luciferianos* 262–3; letters 257
Jerusalem 134
Jesus Christ: philosophy of 4; and Gospels 8; obscure sayings of 9, 233; paintings of 22, 378; on fasting 127, 132; confession to 131–2; David the prototype of 157; unwrapped mysteries of Psalms 158; and the Christian prince 235–7; Hilary on 247, 261, 262–3, 271; divinity of 242–3, 250; Erasmus' early works on 295, 310, 322, 355; despair of 323; papacy reflects 397; evicted moneychangers 398; prayers to 415; death of 417
Jethro, counselled Moses 219
Jews; Judaism: in Regensburg 80; doctors of 95; superstitions of 132, 238, 241; zeal of 135; rejected the gospel 270; and Jerome's translations 306; toleration of 317, 341; proselytization by 391; Osiander accused of being a 403; dietary laws of 442, 448
John the Baptist 392
John Chrysostom, St: aids scriptural study 11, 274; admonished princes 182; on free will 399; edition of, suggested 429
Jonas, Justus 21
Julius, early bishop 263
Julius II, pope 351
Jussellus (unidentified) 452

Karlstadt (Bodenstein), Andreas 21
Kelheim, Ursinus visits 79
Koblenz, Erasmus entertained in 372
Kolde (Coelde), Dietrich, of Münster 416

Lachner, Gertrud, Johann Froben's second wife 104
Lactantius 146
Lambeth 298
Lascaris, Janus 420
Łaski, Hieronim, visits Erasmus 343–5
Łaski, Jan 345
Łaski, Stanisław 345
Lateran Council, Fifth 48
Latomus, Bartholomaeus 2, 373
Latomus, Jacobus (Jacques Masson): and trial of Proost 6, 12n; unpopularity of 15n; supports Baechem 136; attacks Erasmus 140n, 222n; incited Dorp's attack 326. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Apologia contra Latomi dialogum*
Lauingen 77
Laurensen, Laurens 64n, 370–1
Laurentius, early bishop, and Arnobius 149
Laurinus (Lauwerijns), Marcus, dean of St Donatian's, Bruges: greets

Erasmus 56, 143; manuscript of Augustine from 170n; Ep 1342 to 335, 355
- letter to 364

Laurinus, Petrus (Pieter Lauwerijns), brother of Marcus, death of 56

Lauwereyns, Joost, of Bruges 143
- letter to 120

Lebanon, cedars of 207, 287

Lech river 78

Lee, Edward: and Zúñiga 70; Erasmus' answer to 115, 326–7

Lefèvre d'Etaples, Jacques: Zúñiga's attack on 55; Baechem's attack on 135; Erasmus' controversy with 326; Erasmus confused with 385

Leipzig Disputation 28n

Le Marlet, Claude, 'avocat' of the Parlement of Dijon
- letter from 452

Leo x (Giovanni de' Medici), pope: and Fabri 29; invited Ziegler to Rome 30; and Zúñiga 33, 49, 139n, 331; dedication of *Novum instrumentum* to 357; criticism of 398; and Musurus 420
- bulls of: *Decet pontificem romanum* 47n; *Exsurge domine* 132n, 181

Le Sauvage, Jean, chancellor of Burgundy 319–20

Lesbos 156

Lethmaet, Hermann, of Gouda: and Vergara 72, 73; and Wichmans 433
- letters from 195, 430
- letter to 409

Libanius, Greek rhetorician 303

Liège, Aleandro in 54

Lily, William 303

Linz, Ursinus visits 81

Listrius, Gerardus (Gerard Lister) 320

Livy (Titus Livius), style of 255

Lombard. *See* Peter Lombard

London: St Paul's School in 300n, 303; in *Colloquia* 307; sermon against Erasmus in 328

Longueil, Christophe de 423

López Zúñiga (Stunica), Diego: Aleandro and 15, 49; Ziegler's report on 31–6, 220–2; Vergara attempts to mediate dispute with 70–3; Vives reports on 143; reported to Fisher 175; mentioned 279, 386; Erasmus complains of, to Rome 281, 282, 437n; summary of attacks by 329–32
- works of: *Erasmi blasphemiae et impietates*: preparation of 55; Hatten sends abstract of 104; Capito describes 105–6; Caesarius describes 108; generally thought ridiculous 112; publication of, prohibited 139, 162n, 177, 225n; Erasmus urged to answer 160; title-page of 330 *illustration*; *Libellus … praecursor* 177–8. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Apologia ad Blasphemias Stunicae, Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae, Apologia ad Stunicae Conclusiones, Apologia taxationes ad Stunicam*

Loriti, Heinrich. *See* Glareanus, Henricus

Lorraine, Jean de, bishop of Metz, cardinal 194, 385

Louis II, king of Hungary and Bohemia 117n

Louvain: Erasmus in (1502–3) 24n, 30, 70, 145, 322, (1503–4) 297, (28 Oct 1521) 12n; Lent in 56; Vives double-crossed in 57; paraphrases burned in 67n; Bertolph leaves 114; Erasmus' reputation in 135; Erasmus intends to return to 163n; Becker moves to 198–9; Erasmus' departure from (Nov 1521) 366, 369; paraphrases printed in 399; Kolde's death in 416; Erasmus' deceased friends in 423
- College of the Lily, Erasmus' belongings in 109n, 114n, 200n; Collegium Trilingue: prosperous state of 200; Erasmus greets 426
- faculty of theology: Erasmus' enemies in 64, 67, 161, 171, 281, 385; objections to *Colloquia* of 114, 305; letter to 129–36. *See also* Baechem, Nicolaas; Briart, Jan; Dorp, Maarten van; Latomus, Jacobus; Laurensen,

Laurens; Lee, Edward; Robbyns, Jan; Theoderici, Vincentius
Low Countries. *See* Burgundian Netherlands
Lucan 419
Lucian of Samosata, *De somnio sive vita Luciani* 196. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Lucian
Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, Luciferians 262
Lucina 99
Ludwig v, count palatine 337n
Ludwig x, duke of Bavaria 20n
Luther, Martin: Nesen no benefit to 19; Zasius' opinion of 44; Coronel opposes 85–6; Zúñiga inadvertently helps 105, 112, 335; rumours of Gillis' support for 110, 292; estimated number of supporters of 122, 128, 141, 282; action against supporters of (in Brabant) 191–2, (in Poland) 343, (in Nürnberg) 404n, 405; Zwingli and 214; Fabri preaches against 276–7; Hezius foresees destruction of 287; supporters of, frustrate papal attempts at reconciliation 341; rumoured hiding in Basel 389; confident of salvation 425; Lethmaet advised not to join 410, 430
- works of: *Assertio omnium articulorum* 38; *Contra Henricum regem Angliae*: abusiveness of 166n, 392–3, 427, 437; Erasmus reads 395; *De abroganda missa privata* 391; *De captivitate babyonica* 38, 391, 394; *De quatuordecim spectris* 231, 343; *Iudicium de Erasmo Roterodamo* 344n, 393n, 399n, 427n; *Missive an Hartmut von Cronberg* 289n; *Operationes in Psalmos* 343n; *Von beyder Gestallt des Sacraments zu nehmen und ander Newerung* 120n; *Wider den falsch genannten geystlichen Stand des Babst und der Bischoffen* 120n
Luther, Martin, Erasmus and
- Erasmus caught between supporters and opponents of 46, 74, 161, 386–401, 436
- supporters of: accuse Erasmus of Pelagianism 23, 43, 398–400; Erasmus urged to resist threats from 102–3, 403; intercept letters 178 intro; attempt to manipulate Erasmus into their camp 226n, 387, 388, 391; Erasmus loses friends among 317; publish Luther's letter on *Spongia* 339; accuse Erasmus of being corrupted by money 356–63, 388, 427–8. *See also* Germany, Erasmus' standing in
- opponents of, associate Erasmus with Luther: in Louvain 12; in imperial court 14; in Rome (Zúñiga) 31, 70, 104; in Prague 118; due to *Colloquia* (Baechem) 126, 129–36, 306, 308–9; in Mechelen 140; in Paris 240n, 253n; by spreading rumours of Lutherans in Basel 277, 389–90; in Poland 344; in Laurensen's sermons 370; Erasmus denies association with Luther: to Pirckheimer 23; to Wolsey 38–40; to imperial court 59–69, 100; to Prierias 281–2; Erasmus defends his position on Luther: to Zasius 2; to magistrates in Brabant 120–9; to Adrian vi 174n; to Duke George 179–80; to Łaski 343–6; to Spalatinus 426–8; Erasmus criticizes Luther's opponents 47–9, 66–7, 121–5, 127–8. *See also* Roman church: inappropriate defences of
- Erasmus urged to write against: by Glapion 50; by Duke George 120, 288–9; by Adrian vi 205–8, 209–12; by Hezius 287–8; by imperial court 376; Erasmus reluctant to write 40, 95, 161, 180, 182, 229, 344, 434–6; begins dialogue on 46, 49, 65, 97, 106, 347–9; offers plan to Adrian vi 219, 284, 439–41
Lyon 217

Maccabees, relics of 411
Maevius 264
Mainz 45, 372
Malchus, early bishop 263

Manichaeans 151, 262, 263
Manuzio, Aldo, Venetian printer: prints Erasmus' early work 303; Erasmus' work for 310; reprints *Adagia* 316; death of 421
Maquet, Jean, of Binche 370
Marcaeus, Helias 325, 411 intro
Marcella, St Jerome's letters to 267, 268, 269n, 270
Marcionites 63
Marck, Antoine de la, abbot of Beaulieu 19n
Marck, Erard de la, bishop of Liège: tool of Aleandro 49; missing letter to 85, 86; praises Erasmus 101; verbal reply from 368; Erasmus' relations with 359
Marcus, Sélestat carrier 104
Margaret of Austria, regent in the Netherlands 100, 362
Margaret Tudor, queen of Scotland 299
Marliano, Luigi, bishop of Tuy 367n, 368
Marso, Pietro 421
Martin, Dirk, of Aalst 114, 425
Martin, Pieter, carries letter 114
Mary, the Blessed Virgin: miraculous image of 22; Immaculate Conception of 153, 264, 309n; Hilary on 262; prayers to 322, 355, 415; Steinschneider's blasphemies against 447n
Mary of Austria, queen of Hungary and Bohemia 117–18
Mary Tudor, daughter of Henry VII 299
Masson, Jacques. *See* Latomus, Jacobus
Mauthausen, Ursinus visits 81
Maximilian I, emperor: Spiegel and 202; at Cambrai 319; secretaries of 408
Maximinus 147
Mayronnes, François de 24
Mazzolini, Silvestro. *See* Prierias, Silvester
Mechelen: rumours concerning 14; Baechem preaches against Erasmus in 121, 135, 140; Cranevelt moves to 190; Erasmus in 366, 417; unidentified councillor of 416
Medici, Giovanni de'. *See* Leo X
Medici, Giulio de'. *See* Clement VII
Mela, Pomponius 185n, 186n
Melanchthon, Philippus: preaching of 21; rumour of attack on Erasmus by 180n; condemns Hutten's *Expostulatio* 339; Erasmus eager to see 345; *Annotationes in epistolas Pauli ad Romanos et Corinthios* 427
Menlishofer, Johann Jakob, of Überlingen: Erasmus greets 227n, 364; Erasmus inquires after 277; Erasmus dines with 381
Mezentius, king of the Tyrrheian Caere 366, 435
Michael, archangel 295, 355
Middelburg 198
Milan: Schiner in 10; Arianism in 258; Francis I and 369, 449n; remedies from 381
Minervius. *See* Schaidenreisser, Simon
Montanus of Phyrgia 260
More, John, son of Thomas 310
More, Sir Thomas: missing letter from 56; Morillon and 101; missing letter to Vives from 144; missing letter to 162; epigrams by 296; and Erasmus' first visit to Henry VIII 299; replies to Lucian 301n, 319; and origins of *Adagia* 315–16; and *Moriae encomium* 320; Hutten compared with 336
Morillon, Guy, personal secretary to Charles V: and Erasmus' annuity 6; signs letter 52; introduces Erasmus to Coronel 62; carries letter to Barbier 137
- letter from 99
Mosellanus, Petrus (Peter Schade), of Bruttig: expected in Basel 213; on free will 399n
- letter to 160
Moses 219, 448
Mota, Pedro Ruiz de la, bishop of Palencia: tool of Aleandro 49; greets

Erasmus 50; missing letter from 122, 128, 224; recommends paraphrase to Charles v 139, 375
- letter to 59

Mountjoy. *See* Blount, William

Müller, Leonard, abbot of St Georgenberg
- letter from 75

Musurus, Marcus, archbishop of Monemvasia 420

Narcisus, Gattinara's physician 84

Neckar river 77

Nesen, Wilhelm, indiscretion of 19; and *Senecae lucubrationes* 310–11nn

Nestor, king of Pylos 166, 422

Netherlands. *See* Burgundian Netherlands

Neve, Jan de, regent of the College of the Lily: Erasmus' belongings left with 109n, 453–4; death of 412–13, 414n, 423, 426

Noot, Jeroen van der, chancellor of Brabant
- letter to 126

Novatian 151, 154

Núñez Coronel. *See* Coronel

Nürnberg: papal legate alienates 403n, 404–5; diet of 405–6; Oecolampadius reported in 407

Oecolampadius, Johannes: leaves monastery 20; greets Erasmus 167; circle of, in Basel 226n, 277n, 342n; and controversy with Hutten 339n; letter of Luther to 344n; reported in Nürnberg 407

Oppian, Zúñiga lectures on 32

Orestes, madness of 12, 160, 392

Origen: aids scriptural study 11, 274; missing titles of 151; errors of 153; Arnobius' use of 154; Hilary's debt to 265, 268, 269; and Jerome 267; translations of 271; on free will 398, 399; Luther's view of 427n; edition of, suggested 429

Osiander, Andreas 403nn

Ovid: *Medea* 249; early death of 419

Pace, Richard: Erasmus greets 112; and *Antibarbari* 346; among Erasmus' friends in Rome 377

Padua 255, 420

Palatinus, Georg, bishop of Speyer 103

Paris: Erasmus in (1495–6) 91, 296n, 351, (1500) 315, (1502) 321, 322, (1506) 298, (1511) 320; letters to 193; Parlement of 218n; Erasmus' works printed in 295, 305; early Greek learning in 301; clamour against Erasmus in 328; plague in 401
- faculty of theology: members of, at imperial court 12; articles of 105; passages censured by 241n, 245 intro, 250n, 251n, 252n, 253n; criticized Prierias 282; Campester and 307, 309

Passau, Ursinus visits 81

Passavanti, Jacopo 53

Paul, St: and papacy 159, 264; condemned Demas 179; discretion of 243; can be misrepresented as erroneous 249, 437; Hilary's exposition of 253; on Holy Spirit 256; painting of 378; sought to persuade corrupt rulers 398; on free will 399; baptisms by 416; and dietary laws 444. *See also* Erasmus, original works: *Paraphrases*; Erasmus, editions and translations: Paul, St

Paul the Deacon 266n

Paulinus, bishop of Nola 253

Pelagius, Pelagianism: Erasmus accused of 23, 65; not mentioned by Arnobius 152

Pellicanus, Conradus 339n, 343

Persius, Flaccus Aulus 419

Peter, St: and papacy 105, 153, 159, 264; on dietary laws 448

Peter Lombard: *Sententia* 248; restraint of, praised 250

Peutinger, Margarethe 4n

Pfefferkorn, Johann 160, 423n

Phaedrus. *See* Inghirami, Tommaso

Phalaris, ruler of Agrigentum 140, 366, 376, 435

Pharisees 378, 444

Philistines 195
Philoxenus Leucadius 319
Phineas 135
Phrygia, Phrygians 249, 260
Phyrigo. *See* Seidensticker, Paul
Picards 30
Pico della Mirandola, Giovanni 419
Pilate, Pontius 398
Pio, Giambattista 314
Pirckheimer, Charitas 23n
Pirckheimer, Clara 23n
Pirckheimer, Willibald, commended to Chierigati 279
- letters to 22, 47, 279, 289
- letters from 42 *illustration*, 43, 402
Pisa, Council of 282
Piso, Jacobus, of Medgyes 115
Pius II (Enea Silvio Piccolomini), pope 278
Plato, Platonism 52; *Republic, Laws* 294n
Plautus 310
Pliny the Elder: death of 26; supplies knowledge of the arts 196; style of 256; Ermolao's notes on 313; on death 418
Plutarch 314. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Plutarch
Politi, Lancellotto de' (Ambrosius Catharinus Politus) of Siena 67
Poliziano, Angelo 419
Pontius the deacon *Passio Beati Cypriani* 26
Poppenruyter, Johann 322
Prague 117
Praus, Kilian (Clemens), recommended to Erasmus 75–6, 95
Prierias, Silvester (Silvestro Mazzolini, of Priero) 67, 377
- letter to 280
Prodicus of Ceos 197
Proost (Probst), Jacob, of Ieper, prior of Antwerp: Birckmann visits 5n; trial and imprisonment of 12, 20n, 432n
Publilius Syrus, *Sententiae* 41n. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Publilius Syrus
Pucci, Lorenzo, cardinal of Santi Quattro 358
Pyrata, Antonius (Guldenmünster) 227n, 380n
Pyrckmaier, Hilarius, of Landshut 441 intro
Pyrrhus d'Angleberme, Jean, death of 73
Pythagoras 155, 156, 196

Quintilian, style of 255, 256

Raphael, angel 295n
Raurici, Rauraci 77
Regensburg: manuscript in 27, Ursinus visits 80
Regio, Raffaele 420
Resch, Konrad, bookseller: carries letters 193, 275n; and Budé's lexicon 216
Ress, Karl 403n
Reublin, Wilhelm, priest at St Alban's, Basel 111n
Reuchlin, Johann: and Schönfeld 26; Ursinus visits 77; apotheosized in *Colloquia* 176; translation of Athanasius by 223; Erasmus' role in defending 358, 436n; death of 422
Rhegius, Urbanus (Urban Rieger) 245 intro
- letter from 3
Rhenanus. *See* Beatus Rhenanus
Rhine river: Erasmus' journey down 59 intro, 371; description of 379–80
Rhodes, falls to Turks 279, 449n
Rhône river 267
Riario, Raffaele, cardinal of San Giorgio 351, 421
Richter, Martin, of Redwitz, Ziegler's secretary 221n
Riker (de Leeuwis), Dionysius 228n
Rimini, Council of 262, 267
Robbyns, Jan, dean of Mechelen 191, 328n
Rohr, library of 27
Roman church, Roman pontiff, see of Rome: Erasmus' support for 40, 60, 122, 282, 391, 394, 397–8; hatred

of 61, 141, 282; authority of 128, 153, 179, 231, 252, 264; appeal from Basel to 220; inappropriate defences of 329, 334, 388–9, 403–5, 406; and dietary laws 433
Rome: Ziegler's account of events in 28–31; Zúñiga's activities in 31–6, 55, 70, 74, 103, 108, 175, 281, 329–32, 386, 437; *Assertio septem sacramentorum* attributed to Erasmus in 68; Piso in 118; Erasmus invited to 122, 128, 176, 208, 212, 284–5, 358, 377–8; pilgrimage to 134; reception of Adrian VI in 145, 286; popular usage in 148, 149; Erasmus intends to visit 160, 187 intro, 194, 283; support for Erasmus in 161; Erasmus declines invitation to 223, 438–9; ancient style of 255; letters to 280; reformers hesitate to go to 339; manuscript goes astray in 346; Erasmus in (1509) 351, 417, 419, 420, 421; rumours that Erasmus' books condemned in 387; plague in 401; fears of traps laid for Erasmus in 402; dietary laws in 443
Roper, Margaret, More's daughter 310
Roscius Gallus, Quintius, Roman actor 397
Rotterdam 97
Ruffault, Jean, seigneur de Neuville, treasurer-general to Charles V: handles Erasmus' annuity 100, 369; greets Erasmus 163
Ruffault, Jérôme 143
Rufinus of Aquileia 271
Rusticus, and Arnobius 149

Saarburg, Matthias von 372
St Georgenberg, Benedictine monastery of 95
Saint-Maur 217
Sallustius, Hilary's book against 266
Sapidus (Witz), Johannes 94
Saracens 447
Satan 154, 261, 400
Saturninus, bishop of Arles 249, 260
Sauer, Stanislaus, of Lwówek (Löwenberg) 26
Sauermann, Georg, provost of Wrocław 112, 377
Saul 156, 401
Saxony: Campester from 306; unidentified pilgrim from 417
Saxony, Frederick III ('the Wise') of, duke, elector 39
Saxony, George of, duke: Ep 1125 to, mentioned 166; gift from 213; encourages dialogues on Luther affair 348; Erasmus greets 428
– letters to *88 illustration*, 89, 178, 212
– letters from 119, 288
Schabler, Johann 275n
Schade. *See* Mosellanus, Petrus
Schaffhausen 187 intro, 380, 382
Schaidenreisser (Minervius), Simon 95
Schiner, Matthäus, cardinal of Sion: encourages paraphrase on Matthew 8, 10, 23, 63, 202, 232, 323; and Filonardi 87; Barbier and 112; missing letter from 122, 128, 368; invites Erasmus to Rome 139, 160, 162, 176, 358, 377
– letter to 112
Schleupner, Domenicus 403n
Schönfeld, Simon 26
Schrijver, Cornelis. *See* Grapheus, Cornelius
Schürer, Matthias 316
Scipio Nasica Serapio, Publius Cornelius 54
Scotus. *See* Duns Scotus
Seidensticker, Paul (Paulus Constantinus Phyrgio), of Sélestat 94n
Sélestat: Erasmus in (Nov 1521) 2n, 373, (April 1522) 59 intro, 93, 138, 376, 383; courier from 104
Seleucia, Council of 267
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus *Hippolytus* 421. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Seneca
Seriphus, Aegean island 451
Serverus, unidentified monk, tutor to the duke of Alba's sons 57

Sickingen, Erasmus passes through 372
Sickingen, Franz von: Oecolampadius joins 20n, 167n; Erasmus travels with troops of 370, 371
Siena 118, 319
Sixtinus, Johannes, of Bolsward 422
Socrates 56, 251
Solomon 241n
Sonfeldt (Schönfeld), Christoph 26n
Sorbonne. *See* Paris, faculty of theology
Spain, Spaniards: favour Luther 13; trumpery of 27; unidentified enemy of Erasmus at imperial court in 49, 139; Aleandro in 54; dislike for Zúñiga in 55; imperial court leaves for 59 intro, 73, 100, 101; unidentified Spaniard and Vives 86; worries of assaults from 95; missing letters from 111; Latin usage in 147; language of 149; and Hapsburg-Valois wars 163; Glapion dies in 200; return of Philip from 321, 354. *See also* Alcalá; Compostela; Valladolid
Spalatinus, Georgius (Georg Burckhardt) 339n
- letter to 426
Speyer: synod at 103; Erasmus in (Nov 1521) 138, 371, 373
Spiegel, Jakob: introduction for 202; and privilege for Froben 290, 407, 408n; entertains Erasmus 373
Standish, Henry, bishop of St Asaph 328n
Steinschneider (Steinschnider), Sigismund 447
Stercke, Jan, of Meerbeke
- letter from 199
Stewart, Alexander, archbishop of St Andrews 319
Stewart, James, archbishop of St Andrews 319n
Stöffler, Johann, of Justingen 82n
Stoics 130
Storch, Nikolaus 21n
Strasbourg: Erasmus in (Nov 1521) 2n, 373; works printed in 316; edition of Henry VIII's book from 395
Stromer, Heinrich
- letter to 213
Stunica. *See* López Zúñiga
Stuttgart, Ursinus visits 77n
Sucket, Antoon (I), of Mechelen: missing letter from 224, 375; and Wichmans 433
Sucket, Jan (I) 433
Sucket, Maria 433n
Sulpicius Severus of Acquitaine 254
Swabian League 77n
Switzerland, Swiss: portents in 22; Glareanus' reputation among 41; Ursinus leaves 77; no tyrants in 376. *See also* Alps; Basel; Bern; Constance; Koblenz; Zürich
Sylvester, bishop of Rome 263
Symmachus 268

Tannstetter, Georg (Collimitius), of Rain 83
Teramo 278n
Terence 310
Terminus 451n
Terpander of Lesbos 156
Tertullian: on marriage 63, 260; errors of 103, 153, 438; Arnobius Afer follows 146; style of 151, 255; on curiosity 251; translation of Bible used by 272; aids scriptural study 274; Beatus' edition of 313
Teyng, Jacob. *See* Ceratinus, Jacobus
Thale, William: and Vives 16; missing letters from 143; loses manuscripts 346n, 351n
Themistius 62, 314
Theoderici, Vincentius: allies with Baechem against Erasmus 40n, 136, 140, 222, 281n, 335n, 371n
Theodorus of Gaza: mistakes of 314; Latin lectures of 420. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Theodorus of Gaza
Theodotion of Lesbos 268
Thomae (Stübner), Marcus 21n
Thomas Aquinas, St: on the Eucharist

249; not altogether rejected 274; on free will 399; Luther's view of 427n

Thucydides 314

Thurzo, Johannes (II), bishop of Wrocław 58

Thurzo, Stanislaus, bishop of Olomouc 30, 115 intro
- letter to 45
- letter from 58

Tienen 370, 371

Timotheus of Miletus 155

Tiro, Marcus Tullius 352

Torresani, Gianfrancesco, of Asola
- letter to 428

Tournai 138

Tournehem 321

Tournon, François de, archbishop of Embrun 385
- letter to 193

Transsilvanus, Maximilianus, secretary to the imperial chancellery 375

Trebizond, George of (Trebizuntius) 314

Trent 381

Trier 257

Trivet, Nicholas 53

Trojans 303

Truchsess, Thomas, dean of Speyer: passes Zúñiga's book to Hatten 104; Erasmus stays with 138, 373

Tübingen 176

Turks 131; threaten Christendom 174; take Rhodes 279, 449n; attempts to oppose 406

Ülin, Oswald 339n

Ulm, Ursinus visits 77

Ursacius, bishop of Singidunum (Belgrade) 267

Ursinus Velius, Caspar: Erasmus praises 2, 45; and disruptions in Freiburg 45; commends Thurzo 58–9; encourages letter to Piso 116
- works of: *Genethliacon Erasmi* 17
- letter from 76

Utenheim, Christoph von, bishop of Basel: Erasmus' reception by 22, 374; and synod of Speyer 103; Erasmus' writings for 325, 346
- letter to 227

Utrecht 430

Vadianus (von Watt), Joachim, of St Gallen 185–6

Valenciennes 138

Valens, bishop of Mursa 267

Valens, emperor 258

Valentinian I, emperor 258

Valla, Giorgio, of Piacenza 313n

Valla, Lorenzo: Erasmus' edition of 311; errors of 313; early death of 419

Valla, Niccolo 313n

Valladolid, conference of theologians at, censures preface to Hilary 245 intro, 257n, 258, 259n

Varnbüler, Ulrich, of St Gallen 407, 449

Varro, Marcus Terentius 419

Vaugris, Benoît 275n

Veere, Becker moves from 198

Velius. *See* Ursinus Velius

Venatorius, Thomas 403n

Venice: Erasmus' visit to (1507–8) 310n, 420, 429; war on 351; Longueil thought to have died in 423

Vergara, Juan de, chaplain to the imperial court: and Zúñiga 33n, 55; and Carranza 85, 162n; Vives and 163
- letter from 69
- letter to 177

Vesuvius, Mount 26

Vianden, Melchoir Matthaei of: Erasmus' advice for 18, 109n; dedication of paraphrase to 324, 354

Vianis, Bernardus de 311n

Vienna, Ursinus' journey to 83

Vio, Tommaso de. *See* Cajetanus

Virgil: *Eclogues* 156; *Georgics* 249; early death of 419

Vitré, Pierre 304

Vitrier, Jean 322

Vives, Juan Luis: commends Coronel to Erasmus 62; Vergara and 73; and Louis of Flanders 98; introduction for 176
- works of: *De institutione foeminae christianae* 162n. *See also* Erasmus, editions and translations: Augustine, St
- letters from 11, 52, 84, 141, 161

Volz, Paul 67n; Botzheim's debt to 94; Ep 858 to 322
Vrancx (van der Voirst), Jan 433
Vroye, Joost, of Gavere 143, 354
- letter to 412
- letter from 453

Wackers, Conrad. *See* Goclenius, Conradus
Wakefield, Robert 176
Waldensians 30n, 210
Walleys, Thomas de 53n
Wanner, Johann, of Kaufbeuren: preaching of 224, 276, 277; Erasmus greets 364; Erasmus dines with 381
Warham, Richard 16
Warham, William, archbishop of Canterbury: Ep 1228 to, circulated 39n; missing letter to 162; dedication of Euripides to 297; Erasmus and Colet dine with 414
Wattenwyl, Nikolaus von, of Bern
- letter to 41

Wichmans, Pieter
- letter from 432

Wiele, Adriaan, of Brussels 433
Wilhelm IV, duke of Bavaria 20n
Wimpfeling, Jakob, of Sélestat 94
Wittenberg: tumultuous reforms in 21; charges of Pelagianism from 23n; contempt for Erasmus in 166; condemns Hutten's *Expostulatio* 339n; visitors from 345; rumour of secret visit to 374
Witz, Johannes. *See* Sapidus
Wolsey, Thomas, archbishop of York: Morillon and 101; dedication to 302, 357, 359; Erasmus meets, in Bruges 368, 369, 395
- letter to 38

Worms: Erasmus in 138, 372
- Diet of: Schiner at 8; Luther at 14n; Erasmus explains absence from 367
- Edict of: cannot change minds 47n, 181; Baechem exceeds 124; enforcement of 405n

Wouters (Vaulterus), Jan, lord of Vinderhoute 143
Wrocław 26
Württemberg, Ulrich of, duke 77n
Wycliffe, John: Erasmus' views associated with 253; and Luther on free will 399; suppression of followers of 439

Yonge, John, master of the rolls 303n

Zacchaeus 145
Zasius, Udalricus
- letter to 2, 441
- letter from 44

Ziegler, Jakob, of Landau: proposes paraphase of Gospels 10n; portrait of 25 *illustration*; Erasmus greets 112; among Erasmus' friends in Rome 378
- letter from 23
- letter to 220

Zúñiga. *See* López Zúñiga
Zürich: Filonardi moves from 87 intro; Erasmus offered citizenship in 185 intro, 384; Erasmus intends to visit 187 intro
Zwickau, prophets of 21n
Zwilling, Gabriel 21
Zwingli, Huldrych 341n; portrait of 184 *illustration*; Erasmus' opposition to 226n; offers Erasmus citizenship 384
- works of: *Apologeticus Archeteles* 183 intro, 186, 225n; *Suggestio super propositione Hadriani* 214n
- letters to 183, 186, 214

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